Book University Series

SRI VENKATESWARA

The Lord of The Seven Hills, Tirupati

P. SITAPATI

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, I-89-i

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

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By

PIDATALA SITAPATI

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THE LORD OF THE SEVEN HILLS, TIRUPATI

By
PIDATALA SITAPATI

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books, 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once. Each book was to contain from 200 to 250 pages.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the re-integration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit :

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the framework of the Moral Order; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata,* summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari; the second work is on a section of it, the *Gita* by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata*: "What is not in it, is nowhere". After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul; he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine; it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita,* which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

1, QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD,
NEW DELHI: K. M. MUNSHI
3rd October, 1951.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

LORD Sri Venkateswara of the Seven Hills of Tirupati is worshipped throughout India. No comprehensive temple Monograph giving all particulars of this temple is available at present. An attempt has therefore been made in this book to prepare a temple Monograph and give authentic information about the temple and the Lord in a very comprehensive manner, studying the temple and the Lord from the historical, literary, sculptural, religious and other points of view. This book is dedicated to the twin feet of Sri Venkateswara, the Lord of the Seven Hills.

I have to acknowledge with thanks the kind encouragement given to me in the writing of this book by Sri P. V. Narasimha Rao, Minister for Education, who was previously Minister for Law and Endowments in the Government of Andhra Pradesh. This book could not have been written but for the able stenographic assistance of Shri R. Thippanna, Anantapur. I am also grateful to my Sanskrit Guru, Sri Subramanyam Sastri of Anantapur and to Mrs. Rama Devi Sitapati for valuable assistance in the preparation of this book. Thanks are also due to the T. T. Devasthanam authorities, for assistance and facilities given, in particular to Sri K. Vasudeva Rao, I.A.S., Endowments Commissioner, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh. I acknowledge with thanks the excellent photographs of Tirupati presented to me for use in this book by Sri Raju of Raju Photographic Studios, Anantapur.

I also take this opportunity to give my respectful pranams and obeisance to Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya Swamiji of Kanchi Kamakotipeetam.

I am grateful to Dr. K. M. Munshi in particular, and the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay for undertaking the publication of this work in their Book-University series.

HYDERABAD,
2-10-1968.

PIDATALA SITAPATI

AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The first edition of the book *Sri Venkateswara, the Lord of the Seven Hills, Tirupati,* was well received both by the public and the press and was sold out quickly, with the result that a second edition is now being brought out by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. I am grateful to late Dr. K.M. Munshi in particular, and the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, for undertaking the publication of this work in their Book University series. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan has played, and is continuing to play, a major role in the Cultural Renaissance of this country and the credit for visualising, motivating and organising all this creative activity should go to Dr. K.M. Munshi, Kulapati of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

Lord Sri Venkateswara of the Seven Hills, Tirupati, is worshipped in India and abroad. He is the Eternal Cosmic One that is manifested at Tirupati and pervades the entire Universe. This book is dedicated to this Eternal One.

The writing of this monograph on the ancient temple of Tirupati was taken up and completed by me while I was at Anantapur, and as District Collector of Chittoor. Sahitya Ratna Sri P.V. Narasimharao, the scholar-statesman of Andhra Pradesh, was then the Minister for Law and Endowments of the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Sri Narasimharao is the architect of the model statute for religious and charitable endowments i.e., the Andhra Pradesh Charitable and Hindu Religious Institutions and Endowments Act of 1966. It was primarily his encouragement which helped me in bringing out this book and it gives me great pleasure to record my heart-felt gratitude to him. The Telugu translation of this book is on the anvil, the work having been taken up by Mrs. P. Ramadevi Sitapati conjointly with me, and I hope the Telugu version will see the light of the day as soon as possible.

This temple monograph has been revised, and it is hoped, gives authentic information about the temple and the Lord in a comprehensive manner, studying the temple

and the Deity from the historical, literary, sculptural, and other points of view.

I acknowledge with thanks the stenographic assistance of Sri R. Tippanna of Anantapur in the preparation of the book and Sri Raju of Raju Photographic Studios, Anantapur, for the excellent photographs of Tirupati presented to me. I am thankful to my colleague, Sri M. Chandramouli Reddy, I.A.S., Executive Officer, at present at Tirupati, for facilities afforded. The assistance of Sri M. Srinivasulu Naidu, Peshkar of the Tirupati temple, is gratefully acknowledged. I acknowledge the assistance given to me in the compilation of the book by Mrs. P. Rama Devi Sitapati and my daughter Chir. P. Jyothirlakshmi.

Several suggestions made in the first edition of the book as well as suggestions made by me as District Collector, Chittoor, have been or are in the process of being accepted by the temple authorities. It is hoped that a day will soon dawn when every devotee, whatever be his religion or nationality, will have the blessing and a 'Happy Darshan' of the Lord at all times with facilities for meditation and prayer without botheration of payment of fees.

Sarve Janah Sukhino Bhavantu

VISAKHAPATNAM,
3-7-1972

P. SITAPATI

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DEDICATED

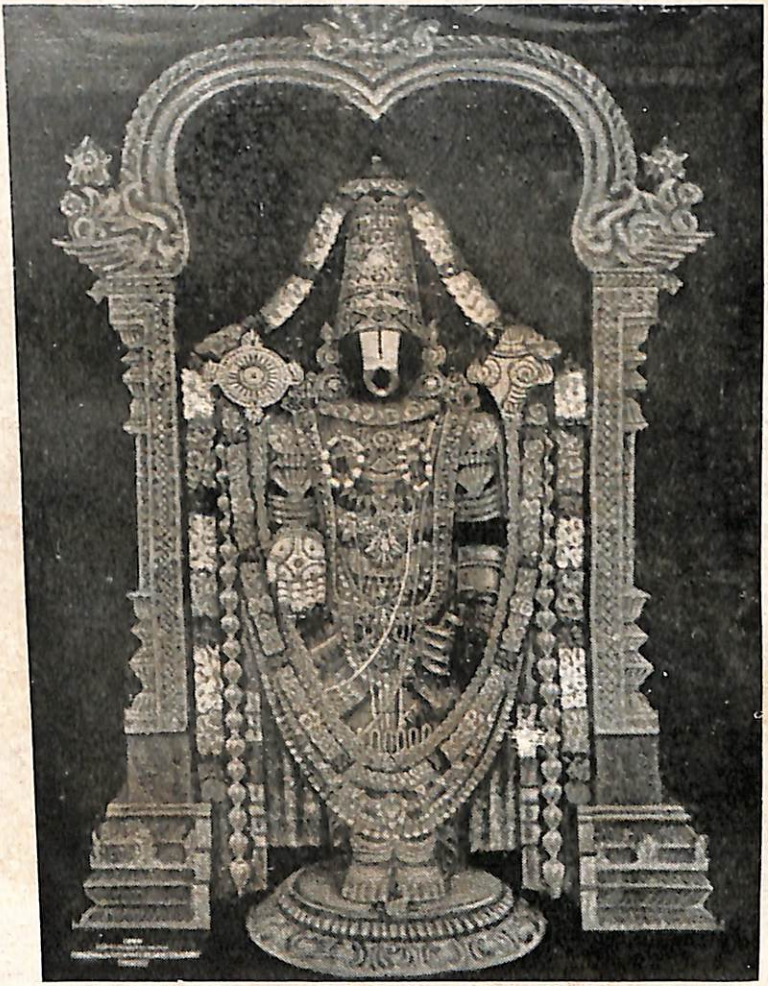
TO

THE

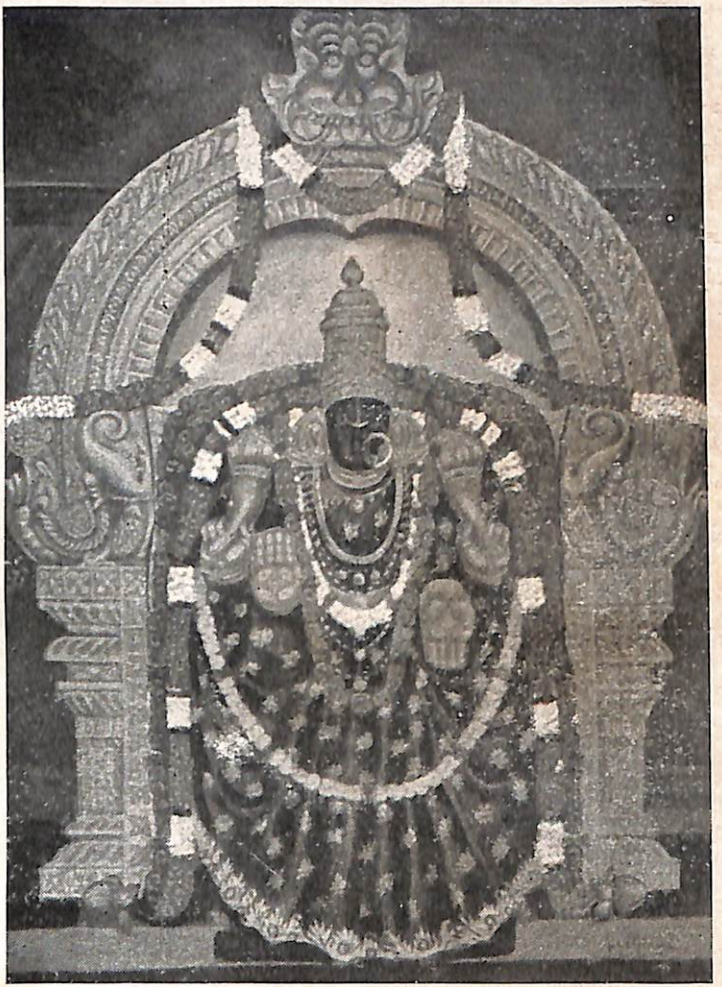
TWIN FEET

OF

SRI VENKATESWARA SWAMY



Lord Venkateswara



Goddess Padmavati

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sri Venkateswara or Balaji is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent. He is everywhere and in the seeker's heart. His abode is Sri Vaikunta. He has however manifested Himself in Tirumalai, near Tirupati—*Dharma Samsthapanarthaya Sambhavami Yuge Yuge*—for the benefit and mukti of his devotees. Enshrined in Tirumalai and in the heart of every Man, the Lord Sri Venkateswara of Tirumalai and His consorts Sri Lakshmi and Sri Padmavathi Amma, rule the Universe. He is verily the Light of the Universe !

Tirumalai is actually a small town located on the seventh hill of the Lord of the Seven Hills. The temple of Balaji is located here, constructed and developed by generations of royal devotees and commoners, around the self-manifested idol of Lord Sri Venkateswara. The nearest railhead to Tirumalai is Tirupati. Tirumalai is sometimes called 'Eguva Tirupati'; the town with the railhead at the bottom of the seven hills is however called 'Diguva Tirupati'. Both the Tirupatis are in the Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh, an important State of Southern India.

Tirupati is a small growing town. Devotees desiring to worship Lord Balaji have first to reach this town. Tirupati is a small station on the Southern Railway of India, seven miles away from Renigunta, an important railway junction on the Madras-Raichur broad-guage line. Renigunta junction is about 135 kilometres away from Madras. Devotees from Northern India can make their way direct to Madras[1] and then make their way to Tirupati by taking

1. An intermediate station on the Delhi-Madras route where the pilgrims can break their journey is Gudur, if they do not desire to proceed to Madras. Connecting trains are available from Gudur to Tirupati.

one of the many convenient trains running from Madras to places like Raichur and Bombay, via Renigunta. They may also reach Tirupati by road, taking a bus in Mint Bus stop at Madras. Pilgrims travelling by car from Madras may reach Tirupati by travelling via Satyavedu, Kalahasti and Renigunta (96 miles) or by reaching Tirupati via Tiruttani, Puttur and Renigunta.

On detraining at Tirupati, the pilgrim would have arrived at the foot of the Seven Hills of the Lord of Tirumalai. Tirumalai is fourteen miles away from Tirupati. A beautiful ghat road connects the two towns. This journey may easily be done in any of the innumerable temple buses run by Tirupati-Tirumalai Devasthanams Trust Board. The Enquiry Office of the T.T. Board at Tirupati will on request also make arrangements for transport and lodging of pilgrims at Tirumalai. The T.T. Devasthanam has many furnished cottages for lodging visitors and pilgrims to Tirumalai on payment basis. Free accommodation can also be obtained by pilgrims by contacting the Devasthanam authorities both at Tirupati and Tirumalai. The Devasthanam has a reception office at Tirumalai working round the clock and the godly souls working in the reception department have never been known to fail any pilgrims visiting Tirumalai to worship the Lord.

The town of Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh lies in the North Latitude 13°-38′ and the East Longitude 79°-25′. The town of Tirumalai located on a range of Eastern Ghats called the Seven Hills lies in the North Latitude 13°-41′[1] and East Longitude 79°-21′. The Tirupati on the plains is itself a pilgrimage centre with a famous temple for Lord Govindaraja and Lord Raghunatha. The famous Alarmel Mangai

1. *T. T. D. Epigraphical Series*, Vol. VI, Part I, Inscriptions of Venkatapatiraya's time, pp. 153-155 (English translations given for all inscriptions in the book).

temple of Sri Padmavathi, the consort of the Lord of Tirumalai, is at a distance of about 3 miles from Tirupati. There is also a famous old temple for Sri Tippaladisvaramudaya Mahadeva (Lord Siva) in Yogimallam village near Tiruchanur (its name in the Chola era was Tiruchchokinur or Yoginur). According to custom pilgrims who worship the Lord of Tirumalai also worship his consort Padmavathi at Alarmel Mangapuram.

The pilgrim who desires to walk up to Tirumalai can do so by taking the traditional sopana-margam to the Hill. The distance to be covered by foot is about seven miles. On his way to Tirumalai, the pilgrim will have to cross several hills. The ascent of the first hill is rather arduous in view of its steep gradient. The first structure on the top of the first hill which he sees en route is the Galigopuram. This Galigopuram was constructed by one Matli Kumara Anantaraja of the Matli family of Chiefs belonging to Rayachoti Taluk of Cuddapah District. Two inscriptions on the eastern and western walls of the 'patala mantapam' in Alipiri at the foot of the hill in Tirupati (the first in Telugu and the second in Tamil) mention in detail the charities of this royal benefactory.[1]

The inscriptions also show that Anantaraja constructed the Agra-gopura on the sopana-margam or pathway to Tirumalai. It would appear that the sopana-margam was

1. The first inscription is in Seesamalika verse and reads as follows:

"Anantaraja, son of Chennamma and Matha Tiruvengadanatha of Deva-Choda family who was the moon to the ocean of the Solar race and who exercised authority over the tract of country lying between the Venkata (Tirupati) and Ahobila hills."

Extent of his country:—

Like Kapardi (Siva), he fought out fiercely the battles at Palagiri Animela, Pileru, Chappalli and Vemupalli; destroyed the armies of the enemies at Kottagala, Palakada, Gundluru and Mushturu; and also at Kumallakalva."

also constructed by him. It is said that there was once a separate pathway to Tirumalai near the Kapila Thirtham; Matli Raja, however appears to have formed new pathway from Alipiri up to the Galigopuram. The above inscription also shows the charities of this royal benefactor. It is of interest to note that philanthropists existed in those days who maintained annasatras or feeding houses for pilgrims proceeding from Sethu or Rameswaram to Badrinath in the Sitalayas or Himalayas. Anantaraja himself maintained twelve such annasatras in Cuddaph district.

Proceeding further the pilgrim has to manoeuvre another steep hill called the Mokallakonda. It is a very difficult ascent; on the top of the hill is a small mantapam with a small temple for Sri Ramanuja. Pilgrims usually rest here and have on opportunity to enjoy the picturesque beauty of the surroundings. According to the *Sri Venkatachala Ithi-*

"His services in Tirumalai Temple:
For Sri Venkatesa, he presented—
(1) A svarnasva (golden horse-vehicle),
(2) A sindhura (elephant-vehicle),
(3) A samara-bhupala-vahana (war-chariot),
(4) A padma-pitha (lotus-shaped seat),
(5) A ratnadhya-makuta (gem-set crown), and
(6) A naivedya-bhajana (plate for offerings); and constructed,
(7) An Unnata-Keli-mantapa (high-sport-Mantapa),
(8) A sopana-marga (path-way with a flight of steps),
(9) An agra-gopura (the tower on the top of the front hill called Gali-Gopuram) and other structures.

His services in Tirupati temple:
For Sri Govindaraja, he presented—
(1) A gaja (elephant-vehicle), and
(2) A turangama (horse-vehicle).

His presentation at Kalahasti:
For Sri Kalahastesvara of Kalahasti (near Tirupati) he presented Kanaka-mayura (golden peacock-vehicle) and a Mohana-vahana (syren or demon-vehicle).

His charity at Tirumalai Hills:
He also installed an image of Venkatadhisvara (Sri Venkatesa) on the pathway over the hill to Tirumalai from Tirupati.

His choultries in 12 cities:

hasa Mala, a Sanskrit work belonging to the 12th century A.D., Sri Ramanuja was studying *Ramayana* with the assistance of his uncle Tirumalainambi under a tamarind tree here. According to this book, a Rishi by name Vishvambara in the town of Kalavingam had set up images of Sri Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita and was worshipping these deities in his native town. When some disturbances occurred in the town, he felt that the images would not be safe and he is said to

---

He established annasatras (daily free feeding houses) at:—
(1) Alvar-Tirtham in Tirupati,
(2) Seshachala-kuruva (pathway over the Tirupati Hills),
(3) Siddhavatta (in Cuddapah district),
(4) Ontimitta (in Cuddapah district),
(5) Pushpagiri town,
(6) Oramupadu village,
(7) Duvvuru village,
(8) Gundluru village,
(9) Porumamilla (in Cuddapah district),
(10) Nelavanuru,
(11) Urmilla village, and
(12) Anantarajapuram village (in Cuddapah district),
for the satisfaction of the travellers performing their pilgrimage on foot (pathika) between Setu (Rameswaram) and Sitachala (Badri hills) over the Himalayas.

List of various gifts performed by Him:

He performed—
(1) Rajata-dana (gift of silver),
(2) Suvarna-dana (gift of gold),
(3) Tula-dana (weighing himself in scales against precious metals and stones),
(4) Mahi-dana (gift of lands),
(5) Go-dana (gift of cows),
(6) Bahu-kanyaka-dana (Marriages of many thousands of girls) to Brahmans whom he enabled through these danas to perform sacrifices and other dana-dharma.

His charity at the foot of Tirupati hills:

He was Lord of Anantarajapura with its gopura built by him, ruling the surrounding tract of country, being entitled Katakapuri-churakara and purified by the bath in the water of the Ganges brought every year.

He constructed a huge tank at the hill-path near Chennuru (in Cuddapah). Beside the lovely and spacious Seshahill he constructed this Sripada-mantapam adored by Brahma, Isvara, Sanaka, other Devas and Sages, to stand as long as the moon and the stars endure.

have directed some Srivaishnavas to take the images for safe custody to Tirumalai. It is said that while Tirumalainambi was expounding the *Ramayana* and explaining the incident of Vibhishana seeking protection of Rama, the Vaishnava priests brought the images of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita, Vibhishana and Angada and placed them in front of Sri Ramanuja. Sri Ramanuja and Tirumalainambi are then said to have taken these images to Tirumalai and arranged for their worship there.

There are several other mantapams on the sopana-margam to Tirumalai. One such is the Ghanta mantapam on the way. According to tradition, there was a ghanta or a bell in this mantapam and Sri Ranganatha Yadavaraya of Chandragiri (1336-1356), a local Chief, was in the habit of taking his food at Chandragiri only after hearing the bell indicating that the Mahanaivedyam had been offered to the Lord of Tirumalai. It is this Chief who constructed for himself a royal palace on Venkatachalam.

Proceeding further up, the pilgrim gets his first electrifying vision of Tirumalai, the Kaliyuga Vaikunta on earth, his journey's end. He has a bath in the holy Swami Pushkarini and is ready for the darshan of Sri Venkateswara, the Katyavalambita murthi and the Lord with the Varada hasta who is ever ready to come to the succour of his devotees.

CHAPTER II

THE LORD IN THE TEMPLE

In this Chapter, it shall be our endeavour to join the queue of devotees entering the temple to obtain 'darshan' of the Lord in the temple. We repeat with the devotees the names of the Lord. "Om Namo Narayanayah' is the mantra on the lips of several of the devotees. 'Yedu Kondala Vada, Venkataramana, Govinda, Govinda'[1] is a cry which we hear often. 'Ramaramana Govinda, Govinda' is another ecstatic shout that we hear as we make our way into the inner temple. 'Vaddi Kasula Vada, Govinda, Jai Balaji'[2] are some of the other sounds which are music to our ears, as we walk in with a breathless heart into the sixteen-pillared Tirumamani Mantapam near the 'Bangaru Vakili' or the golden gate. Here we get the first electrifying vision of the stately Lord Sri Venkateswara with eyes that shower grace and love on Humanity. We pass through the 'Bangaru Vakili' and step into the closed Tiruvilankoyil Mantapa or Snapana mantapa as it is called. Passing through the Ramar Medai passage, we step into the closed Sayana Mantapa next to the Garba Griha or sanctum sanctorum. We now have the *darshan* of the Light of the Universe and the Lord of Tirumalai:

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता ।
यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ।।

'If the effulgence of a thousand Suns arose at once in

1. (Tel.) *Yedu Kondalu* stands for Seven Hills.—'Venkataramana of the Seven Hills'.
2. (Tel.) *Vaddikasula Vada* stands for one who obtains 'interest'. The Lord has the reputation of collecting his dues from his devotees with interest. Balaji is the name by which the Lord is known in Northern India.

the firmament, it would be somewhat like the brilliance of this great Atman'. (Gita, Chap. 11-Verse 12).

We worship the Lord and pray to him—

१. वन्दे श्री नयनोत्पलस्य शशिनं शेषाचलाधीश्वरं ब्रह्माद्यर्चितपाद-पद्मयुगलं लोकैकनेत्रोत्सवम् । वासिष्टः सनकादिभिर्मुनिगणैः संस्तूयमानं सदा भक्तानामखिलार्थदायिनमहं श्रीवेङ्कटेशं गुरुम् ।।[1]

Lord of Seshachala! Our obeisance to you who art the Moon to the lotus-like eyes of Lakshmi! Thy twin feet are worshipped by Brahma! Thou art the Only Delight of the Universe! Thou art always extolled by the Sages Vasista, Sanaka and others. Thou Bestower of all that is desired by the devotees! Oh! Lord Venkateswara! Our GURU! We bow down to thee!

Before attempting a description of the Lord's images in Tirumalai it would be relevant to acquaint ourselves briefly with some of the important principles of the *Hindu Silpa Sastra* connected with the making of Vishnu images in particular.

The sastras have laid down the standards of excellence and beauty and the defects to be avoided while making images of the Lord. Their idea of beauty has been sublime. According to *Sukraniti* an image is ideal only when it elevates the lookers on to a higher plane of action and meditation. The eyes of images have particular appeal to the devotee and as such the eyes should be perfect bespeaking satisfaction and should neither be directed upwards, downwards or closed. According to the *Pratima Mana Lakshanam,* the mouth should be 'slightly smiling, pleasant and possessed of all good signs'. The mouth should also not be sculptured as one that is 'passionate, impetuous, wrathful, sour, bitter or circular'. Again, according to the *Pratima Mana Lakshanam*

1. *Maricha Samhita* (Sanskrit) 'Sri Vimanarchana Kalpa'—Madras (1927).

the head sculptured like an umbrella brings prosperity. Eternal prosperity is assured by an image with beautiful lines of eyebrows and forehead. The neck has to be conch like, the body in the posture of a lion, the arms like the trunk of an elephant, and thighs like the plantain tree. A beautiful belly and beautiful feet are excellences in any idol. *Sukraniti* has also laid down that images should be beautiful. Considerable freedom was however given in many cases to *silpins* to carve images following the *Sastraic* principles as far as possible. They had however to keep in mind that 'the characteristic of an image is its power of helping forward contemplation and yoga'[1] while making idols and images.

The Vishnu image is generally shown in one of the three poses—*Sthanaka, Asana* and *Sayana.* Sthanaka is the standing pose, Asana is the sitting pose, and Sayana is the reclining pose. According to the *Maricha Samhita,*[2] Vishnu images can be classified into nine categories; the three main categories are Sthanaka, Asana and Sayana. There are sub-categories for each main category such as (1) Uttama, (2) Madhyama and (3) Adhama. The *Gheranda Samhita* however is said to mention on Lord Siva's authority that there are eightyfour hundred thousand *asanas* and mentions in particular, of thirty two important poses, such as Sidham (Perfect posture), Padmam (lotus posture), Yogasana, Swastikasana, Varasana etc. These are perhaps the varieties of combinations in which images can be made, depending on the type, mudra etc. The *agama sastras* such as the Vaikhanasa Agama, the Pancharatra Agama, the Tantrasara and Vishnu Dharmottaram lay down the principles on which Vishnu images are to be made. There are four

1. *Principles of Indian Silpa Sastra* by Prof. Phanindra Natha Bose, The Punjab Sanskrit Book Depot, Lahore, 1926.
2. *Maricha Samhita* (Sanskrit), Sri Vimanarchana Kalpa, Madras (1927).

important types of Vishnu images, namely Yoga, Bhoga, Veera and Abhicharika types. Yogis worship Yoga images whereas Bhoga (which literally means pleasures) images are worshipped by householders and give worldly pleasures — bhoga. The Veera images give power while Abhicharika varieties are worshipped to conquer enemies and bring misfortune to foes. Vishnu images have usually four arms, the *ayudhas* or weapons held in the hands usually being the *Chakra, Sankha* or conch, the Bow and Arrows and the *Gada* or club. The other weapons of Vishnu include the *Khetaka* or the shield, the *Katari* or the sword, the *Parasu* or the battle-axe, *Hala* or the plough, and sometimes the whip (for Gopi-Krishna) images. The hands are usually in the Abhaya, Varada and Katyavalambita poses. It is however relevant to note here that the Yogasastra recognises twenty five kinds of mudras in images.[1] The Abhaya pose is the one in which the Lord holds his hand aloft, with the right palm facing the devotee with all the fingers of the hand pointing upwards. This is a pose in which the Lord assures his protection to the devotee — relieving him from fear i.e. *Bhaya.* The *Varada hasta* is the pose in which the Lord holds his hand (left hand) with the palm facing the devotee with all the fingers of the hand pointing downwards. This pose signifies that the Lord is a giver of boons. According to the Mayasastram however, "when the tip of the thumb is placed at the end of the breast, it is the attitude of *abhaya* or protection of the God. If the hand is on the waist, it is said to be the attitude of giving *vara* or boon". The *Katyavalambita hasta* pose is the one in which the Lord keeps his hand (left hand) on the *kati* or waist. This is a pose

1. Also mentioned in *Gheranda Samhita.* The mudras are Maha-mudra, Nabho-mudra, Uddiyana, Jalandhra, Mulabandha, Mahabandha, Mahavedha, Khechari, Viparitakari, Yoni, Vajroni, Saktichalani, Tadagi, Mandavi, Sambhavi, Panchadharana (Five dharanas), Pasini, Kaki, Matangi and Bhujangini.

that indicates that the Lord's protection and grace is available to those worshipping him with constant devotion. According to another interpretation, it indicates that the Samsara is knee-deep only to those devoted to Lord's feet. Vishnu images are shown to carry several ornaments such as the *Padma* or the lotus, *Kireeta* or the crown, *Makara Kundalas* or crocodile ear ornaments, *Keyura* or armlets, *Kankanas* or wristlets, *Udarabandhas* or ornaments around the waist, *Katibandhas* or ornaments around the waist and the hips, the sacred thread etc. There is usually a mole on the right chest called the *Srivatsa,* and a garland reaching up to the knees called the *Vaijayantimala. Sree Koustubam* is a gemstudded jewel on the chest which is sacred to Lakshmi. The consort of the Lord is usually carved or exhibited near the *Srivatsa* and the *Sree Koustubam.*

The Yoga idols are usually in the Yoga mudra and not unusually accompanied by the consorts Bhudevi and Sridevi. In the *sthanaka* or standing pose, the Lord has four arms with Chakra and Sankha in the upper hands at the rear: two other lower hands in the front usually are in the Abhaya and Katyavalambita poses. Bhudevi and Sridevi are usually present.

The Yoga idol in the sitting pose has also four arms of white colour with a crown of hair on the head. The Lord is usually in the Yogasana pose. The Yogasana is described by *Gheranda Samhita* as follows: while squatting "turn the feet upwards, place them on the knees; then place the hands on the *asana* with the palm turned upwards; inspire and fix the gaze on the tip of the nose". The best example perhaps of the Yogasana murthi in the sitting pose is that of Sri Badari Narayana of Badrinath, also called the Badri Vishal form. In Badrinath, the Lord is seated on a lotus in the yogasana pose with two hands in the yogamudra. The

thumbs of both the hands touch one another while the palms of the hand face upwards in this mudra. The upper and rear arms hold the Chakra and Sankha. The consorts of the Lord along with others such as Garuda, Thumbura, Narada, Vigneswara, Brigu and Markandeya are also shown usually along with the yogasana murthi. The *sayana* or reclining yoga idol has only two hands; the right hand is usually placed near the pillow under the head whereas the left hand is shown alongside the *sayana murthi*. The typical yogasana murthi in the reclining pose is that of Sriranganatha of Srirangam in South India.

The Bhoga idols of Lord Vishnu have also four arms with Sankha and Chakra in the standing pose. The hands are usually in the Abhaya, Varada or Katyavalambita poses. Sridevi and Bhudevi are also usually carved beside the Bhoga type idol. In the sitting pose, the Bhoga idol is usually seated in the *Sukhasana*, an asana in which the right leg is shown as hanging down and the left leg folded to touch the right thigh. It is also usual to depict the consorts of the Lord as sitting on the left thigh of the idol. There are usually four arms in such idols, the upper ones holding the Chakra and Sankha while the two hands at the front are in the varada, abhaya or simhakarna poses. Where Sri Lakshmi is shown as seated on the lap of the Lord, it is usual for the Lord's lower left hand being shown in the pose of encircling her waist. The hand rests on her left thigh. The simhakarna pose is the one in which the fingers of the Lord are folded to resemble the ears of a lion. The reclining Bhoga murthi has usually two or four arms and a well-built body. In this type of idol, Sri Lakshmi is usually depicted as seated near the shoulders of the Lord. Brahma is usually shown as seated near the navel of the main idol; Bhudevi is usually seated near the feet of the Lord.

The Veera type of Vishnu image in the standing pose is

similar in several aspects to that of the standing yoga murthi. The Veera murthi however stands alone or is surrounded by the Sun, the Moon, Brahma and Siva. The sitting Veera murthi is usually seated on a *simhasana,* i.e. a lion-seat. His left leg is bent whereas the right leg is extended in front. Sri Lakshmi and Bhudevi are also shown. The reclining Veera murthi has four arms of which one arm is used as a pillow (usually the right hand) whereas the other right hand holds the Chakra. One of the left hands is stretched out parallel to the reclining murthi while the second left hand holds the conch.

The Abhicharika variety idols are usually dark-complexioned and look vicious to show *ugra.* The standing variety is depicted as having two or four arms. The sitting Abhicharika idol is usually shown on an unornamented plain pedestal and has either two or four arms. The reclining idol is usually shown lying on the floor with two or four arms. The consorts of the Lord are not in attendance in this type. Rishis and the demons Madhu and Kaitabha are also shown in the act of supplication.[1]

The above gives an account of the making of Vishnu images in general. The Lord's image at Tirumalai is a Sthanaka or standing figure. The worship in the Sri Venkateswara temple at Tirumalai follows the Vaikhanasa Agama. It is therefore relevant and necessary for us to inform ourselves about the rules laid down in the Vaikhanasa Agamas for Vishnu images in the Sthanaka pose. According to Maricha Samhita,[2] Vishnu images in the Sthanaka pose can be Yoga, Bhoga, Veera or Abicharika murthis. In each type, there would be three sub-types—namely the Uttama, Madhyama and Adhama Murthis.

1. *A Hand Book of South Indian Images,* by T. N. Srinivasan, T. T. Devasthanam, 1954.
2. *Maricha Samhita, Sri Vimanarchanakalpa* (Sanskrit), Sri Venkateswara Mudranalaya, Madras, 1927.

The Yoga-Uttama-Sthanaka murthi should be Syama (dark) in colour with four arms; the Sankha and Chakra should be exhibited; one of the right hands should be in the Abhaya hasta pose, while one of the left hands should be in the Katyavalambita pose. On the right, the sages Brigu and Markandeya should be seated. Brahma with four arms should be shown as standing near the right side facing north with his ayudhas such as Aksha Mala and Kamandala; two of his hands should be in the Abhaya and Katyavalambita poses. Siva should be shown facing south with four arms, two of them in the Abhaya and Katyavalambita poses and the other two holding a Mriga (Deer) and a Parasu (Axe). The complexion of Siva should be white.

In the Yoga-Madhyama-Sthanaka murthi, the Parivaradevathas Brahma and Siva should be absent.

In the Yoga-Adhama-Sthanaka murthi, the sages Brigu and Markandeya should be absent.

The Bhoga-Uttama-Sthanaka murthi should be dark in colour with four arms. The Sankha and Chakra should be exhibited. One of the right hands should be either in the Abhaya or Varada Hasta poses. One of the left hands should be in the Katyavalambita simhakarna pose. Siva and Brahma should stand to the right; Sri Devi or (Lakshmi) with a lotus in her left hand and a *Prasaritha Dakshina Hasta* (extended right hand) should stand to the right while Bhudevi with *Prasaritha* and *Dhruthotpala hastas* should stand to the left. The Parivara Devas and sages include Brigu, Veda Vyasa, Maya, Samhladini, Vyayagini, Thumburu, Narada, Kinnara, Mithuna, Yaksha, Vidyadhara, Sanaka, Sanath Kumara, Surya and Chandra.

In the Bhoga-Madhyama-Sthanaka murthi, Thumburu, Narada, Yaksha and Vidyadhara should be absent.

In the Bhoga-Adhama-Sthanaka murthi, the Sun and the Moon should be absent.

The Veera-Uttama Sthanaka murthi should be Syama in colour with four arms. The *sankha* and *chakra* should be exhibited. Brahma and Siva should be on the right and left sides. Similarly Brigu and Markandeya, Kishkinda and Sundara, Vyajaka, Sanaka, Sanath Kumara, the Sun and the Moon should be present.

In the Veera-Madhyama-Sthanaka murthi, Kishkindha, Sundara, Sanaka and Sanath Kumara should be absent.

In the Veera-Adhama-Sthanaka murthi, the Sun, the Moon and the sages should be absent.

All the Abhicharika-Sthanaka murthis should have either two or four arms. The colour of the murthi should be grey (Dhuma Varna—colour of smoke). The murthi should have dark lips, withered or dried up limbs, should exhibit thamo Guna; should have eyes turned upwards. The Parivara Devas, Brahma etc. should be absent. It should however be surrounded by Paisachas or evil spirits, and should not have any auspicious qualities.

With the foregoing knowledge in the background, we may now attempt a description of the Lord's idol at Tirumalai. In the first instance it should be stated that the Lord manifested himself on the Tiruvengadam hill in the greatness of his love and mercy to come to the succour of his devotees on the earth.

The story of his manifestation in a Divya-Vimana on the banks of the Swami Pushkarini is described in detail in several of the Puranas such as Varaha Purana, Bhavishyottara Purana etc.; these legends are described in detail in Chapter VIII of this book. The book *Sri Venkatachala Mahatmyam* which is an anthology of the accounts of the Lord's leelas described in the various Puranas informs us that Lord Srinivasa manifested himself in a celestial Vimanam on the Swami Pushkarini located on the Lord's Kridadri or Seshachalam and that this Kridadri or Venkatachalam

was specially brought down to earth from Sri Vaikuntam, the Lord's abode. The manifestation was in the yuga of the Sweta Varaha Kalpa. In this age Brahma was the first to worship the Lord. The Lord then became an idol assuming the *archavatara* in Kaliyuga. This idol was discovered in an ant-hill by one Tondaiman with the assistance of one Rangadasa and was first worshipped by the Sage Vaikhanasa. If the above claim that the Lord's image is a self-manifested figure is accepted, the question of examining it from the standpoint of the Agamas and Silpasastras does not arise at all. It would however be interesting to study the Lord's image first and examine how far it conforms to or differs from the standards of construction, excellence etc. laid down in the Agamas, particularly the Vaikhanasa Maricha Samhita.

As stated earlier, the Lord's image is in the Sthanaka or standing pose. The Lord is standing on a high lotus pedestal. The height of the Lord has never been recorded, but cannot be less than nine feet from the tip of the 'makutam' i.e. the crown to the bottom of the lotus pedestal as can be seen clearly on a Friday when 'abhishekam' is done after removing all the gold 'kavachas' etc. ornamenting his figure. The priest performing the worship, about five feet tall, standing on a stool two and a half feet high is not able to perform 'abhishekam' on the Lord's Makuta without assistance from a priest standing behind the idol. Keeping in view this fact and that the lotus pedestal on which the Lord stands is itself below the floor in the sanctum-sanctorum, the Lord's figure from the tip of the crown to the base of the lotus pedestal, must measure between nine and ten feet.

The image is perfection personified, and it would not be incorrect to say is the most handsome and perfectly featured idol of India.

According to tradition, the idol is a manifestation of

the Lord in Salagrama Sila. It is worthy of note here that granite and a kind of reddish igneous rock are the stones abundantly available in the area around Tirumalai hills. The idol of the Lord is liberally anointed frequently with civet or 'punugu' oil; this application of oil makes the idol dark in colour and does not enable us to make an accurate assessment of the material of the image. The material of the idol could be granite or the red igneous rock mentioned above. There is a famous Sivalinga in the village of Gudimallam, seven miles from Renigunta in Chittoor District. The Sivalingam called Shri Parasurameswara made of reddish igneous rock is unique in the whole of India in that it is about five feet in height and has on it in front a beautiful image of Siva carved in bas-relief. This image is *sthanaka,* having two arms, the right one holding a ram by its hindlegs and the left a waterpot while a battle axe rests upon the left shoulder. On the head a covering resembling a turban of plaited hair is worked out. The face is very lovely, chubby with prominent nose, high cheek bones and oblique eyes (Virupaksha). There are kundalas in the ears and ornaments of good workmanship round the neck. It has no *yagnopavita.* Though there is the representation of a small cloth round the loins, the image is nude. The figure stands astride on the shoulders of a demon Apasmarapurusha. Behind the image is the linga portion which has a close resemblance to phallus. This linga is considered very old and is said to belong to the first century before Christ.[1] This is an early Satavahana period's sculpture. The village of Gudimallam is about 30 miles from Tirumalai. The material of the Lord's image at Tirumalai appears to be similar to that of the material of the Sivalinga at Gudimallam. Both the images have a high polish and shine like mirrors.

1. *A Hand Book of South Indian Images* by T. N. Srinivasan, T. T. Devasthanam, 1954.

Reddish igneous rock is also a stone native to Tirumalai. It may therefore be possible that the Lord's image is made up of reddish igneous rock.

We may now attempt a description of the body of the Lord of Tirumalai. The Lord's majestic beauty is best seen at the time of the Friday Abhishekam when the jewels and other paraphernalia do not cover our view of Him in his celestial glory. It is at this time that we see the eyes of the Lord in the 'Sama dristi pose' showering divine grace on the expectant devotees assembled to offer worship to Him. The eyes neither look up nor downwards, but straight into the devotees' eyes (as laid down in the *Sukraniti*). The face is beaming with joy and wears a smile. An aura of meditation and abundant love is the constant atmosphere around the Lord, wearing a *makuta* or crown which is more than 20 inches high. The Lord's figure is richly adored with flowing locks of hair or *jata juta* and some of these locks of curly hair rest on his shoulders. The nose is delicately carved and is neither prominent nor flat. The mouth of the Lord is also exquisitely shaped. According to the *Pratima Mana Lakshanam* the mouth 'should be made slightly smiling, pleasant and possessed of all good signs. One should absolutely avoid the construction of the mouth which is passionate, impetuous, wrathful, sour, bitter or circular.' The Lord's mouth is in a smiling pose and would conform to the idealised standard laid down by the above work. The chin and the ears are carved proportionately. The ears wear beautiful ear ornaments. The chest of the Lord is magnificent in cut and size and should, if measured, be between 36 to 40 inches in width, while the waist would be between 24 to 27 inches. The neck is conch-like and the body in the posture of a lion and exquisitely shaped. The belly is also beautifully modelled. The Lord's image has four arms, the

upper two being carved to hold the chakram and the conch; the chakram and the conch are not integral parts of the main idol. The upper right arm holds the *Sudarshana Chakra*; the upper left arm holds the *Panchajanya*, the conch of Lord Vishnu which is blown by Him in times of war. The lower right hand of the Lord is in the Varada Hasta pose, while the lower left hand is in the Katyavalambita pose. Actually the fingers of the left hand rest on the left thigh, with the thumb of the hand almost parallel to the waist line. The pose as explained already is a reminder to the devotees that those who worship the Lord's feet with constant devotion will be blessed and protected by Him.[1] While the idol itself is not exactly standing in the *tribhanga* pose, as in the case of Sri Rama idols, the body near and below the waist has taken a slight tilt to the left and the knees themselves are bent and open slightly outwards, giving the idols peculiar grace and charm. Mother Lakshmi is carved on the right chest of the Lord in the sitting pose and is an integral part of the *mula murthi*. The *yagnopavitam* and a set of four necklaces or ornaments of the neck can also be clearly made out on the idol. The arms have armlets with finger-like projections which appear to be Nagabhushanams or Cobra-ornaments. A cobra is also said to be coiled around the Lord's right arm. The figure is depicted as wearing a dhoti from the waist downwards, while the upper portion is not covered by any dress or Vastram. The nipples of the Lord on his chest are button-like and are prominent. There is however a *Katibandham* or waist band and this waist band is about 2 inches thick. The legs and feet of the Lord are beautifully shaped, strong and lissome. As indicated earlier, both the knees are bent

1. We may remember here that the Srivaishnavites' invocation to the Lord in the Dvaya Mantra is *Sriman Narayana Charanau Saranam Prapadye; Srimathe Narayanaya Namaha.*

and open slightly outwards, giving the stately figure charm and grace, that words cannot adequately describe. The feet are models of perfection and have ornaments near the anklets. The Lord's image has on the shoulders marks resembling 'scars made by the constant wearing of the bow and a pack of arrows'.

The perfectly modelled image of the Lord is personified Beauty and is indeed a Divya Manohara Murthi. The image bears some resemblance to the famous Bodhisattva Padmapani painting in Cave 1 of the Ajanta Hills. The Bodhisattva has of course only two arms; but if the Bodhisattva is shown with four arms and with his neck erect and his eyes in the *Sama Dristi* pose instead of the *Avanita Dristi pose,* the Bodhisattva would appear as if it is a study of the Lord at Tirumalai. The resemblance can only be ascribed to chance and no inference whatsoever can be made linking up the two.

We may now examine how far the image conforms to the yardsticks of construction, exhibition etc. laid down in the Maricha Samhita.

The figure is *syama* in colour, and has four arms. It is not a Yoga-Sthanaka Vishnu, as the right hand according to Maricha Samhita has to be an Abhaya Hasta. In fact, the Lord only exhibits a Varada Hasta and not an Abhaya Hasta. The other deities mentioned as essential for a Yoga-Sthanaka image are absent. The image is also not a Bhoga or a Veera or an Abhicharika murthi as one or the other of the characteristics mentioned in the *Maricha Samhita* are not satisfied by the Murthi.

One can therefore argue that the Lord's image is a super-Agamic manifestation, that is, one that existed before the Agamas came into being. Another plausible argument is that the image is a class by itself and not a simple Vishnu

image. It is one that combines in itself the Hari and Hara aspects of the Supreme Spirit.

Nature of the Image of the Lord of Tirumalai:—Is Lord Venkateswara of Tirumalai a manifestation of Vishnu or Siva? Is he a manifestation of Subrahmanya Swamy or Shakti? These are the questions which time and again agitate the minds of the devotees who intensely believe in the Lord of Tirumalai as the One and Only God who can bestow on them Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Sri Vaishnavas hold that the Lord is Vishnu and Vishnu alone, while Saivas who see in Him their Istha Daivam Siva, hold with equal enthusiasm that He is Siva. Some again hold the view that the image is that of Skanda. A few Sakti worshippers also believe that the deity is Parasakthi. Several devotees of the Lord are again of the view that He is the combination of Vishnu and Siva elements and is in fact a Hari-Hara murthi. There are again others who hold that the Lord Venkateswara is manifestation of Paravasudeva.

The controversy about the Hari and Hara nature of the Lord was actually argued by the contending parties in the 11th or 12th centuries A.D. before a Yadava Raja of Narayanavanam in the Jayakonda Chola Mandalam. The *Sri Venkatachala Ithihasa Mala*[1], a Sanskrit work of the 12th century, describes in detail in its first three stabakas a scholarly discussion carried on at a high intellectual level long long ago, between the Vaishnavites led by Sri Ramanuja and the Saivites about the nature of the Lord's image at Tirumalai—whether it was a Saivite image or the image of Vishnu. The very first Yadava Raja who is noticed by us in

1. *Sri Venkatachala Ithihasa Mala* is said to have been written by Anantarya, a disciple of Ramanuja (1017-1137 A.D.).
Anantarya may therefore be taken as a contemporary of Ramanuja and the book might have been written in the first half of 12th century.

the Tirupati-Tirumalai Devasthanam Inscriptions is one Tirukkalati Devaraya whose reign has been calculated to begin in the year 1191 A.D. The discussions reported in the *Sri Venkatachala Ithihasa Mala* could not have taken place before him as Sri Ramanuja is said to have been born in the year 1017 A.D., lived for 120 years and expired in the year 1137 A.D. It is possible that the intellectual combat took place before an early ancestor of Tirukkalati Devaraya. A brief summary of the arguments advanced by both the contending parties is given below:

The image of the Lord in Tirumalai is that of Skanda or Kumara Swami. The holy Pushkarini on Tirumalai itself is therefore called Swami Pushkarini. Swami is really an appellation commonly used for Skanda or Subrahmanya Swami. The shortened form 'Swami' is used instead of calling the Pushkarini 'Kumara Swami Pushkarini'. It is not unusual for nouns to be used thus in the shortened form. For example, the nouns Bheema Sena and Sathya Bhama are usually used in the shortened forms as Bheema and Bhama. The *Vamana Purana* also mentions that Skanda performed penance on Venkatachala on the advice of his father Siva. The image of the Lord at Tirumalai is that of Skanda and not Vishnu. Venkatachalam is primarily a Varaha Kshetram and as Vishnu has already manifested himself here in the Boar form, the image of the Lord at Tirumalai can only be that of Skanda.

The image of the Lord has not got the characteristic weapons of Vishnu such as the Chakra and the Sankha. Skanda came to perform tapas on the banks of the Pushkarini and has manifested himself without his weapons or his extra hands. The Vaishnavites had taken possession of the temple of Subrahmanya and had converted it into a Vishnu temple. The presence of the matted locks or *Jata*

Jutas on the image and the Nagabhushanams (snake ornaments) prove that it is a Saivite image. Puja is also done in the temple with 'bilva' leaves; bilva leaves are used only for worship in Saivite temples and not used for Vishnu worship. The image has also a crescent mark on the head indicating that the image is Siva if not Kumara Swami.

The arguments said to have been put forward by Sri Ramanuja on behalf of the Vaishnavites may be now given briefly.

The term 'Swami' need not apply to Kumaraswami. It only means that Swami Pushkarini is the 'Swami' in 'thirthams' and thus a Lord among holy thirthas. The holy thirtha associated with Kumaraswami is Kumaradara. The *Varaha Purana* also mentions that Swami Pushkarini is the sporting tank of Vishnu brought down to earth from Vaikuntam. All the puranas state conclusively that the deity on the Pushkarini is the Lord of Lakshmi. Skanda came to worship Vishnu at Tirumalai. It would also be wrong to hold that the deity that came to worship Vishnu is deified on Venkatachalam. The Lord's image has four arms and one face whereas Skanda should normally have six faces and twelve hands. In the verses of Nammalvar the deity is recognised clearly as Vishnu. The image does not bear the Sankha and the Chakra because Lord Vishnu in his infinite divine grace parted with the weapons to assist his devotee Tondaiman Chakravarthi in battle against his enemies. This is confirmed in *Brahmanda Purana.* While it is true that worship is done in the temple with *bilva,* it can be argued that bilva is acceptable to Lakshmi and what is acceptable to Lakshmi is naturally acceptable to her Consort, Vishnu. Vishnu images can also have *jata jutas* as laid down in the Bhagavata. The nagabhushanams cannot be strong arguments as *Padma Purana* mentions of instances

of Vishnu wearing Naga figures. The *Bhavishyottara Purana* also mentions that Naga jewels were presented by Akasa Raja to his son-in-law and the wearing of these jewels cannot be said to be peculiar. The image of the Lord has Vakshastala Lakshmi and also the Srivatsa mark. Even the early Alwars who stressed the Saiva features of the image speak of him as Narayana only. The Puranas also mention that Brahma and Rudra came to worship Srinivasa when He manifested Himself on Tirumalai. It is true that the image has a mark on its face resembling that of the crescent-moon. This however cannot mean that this is a Saivite character. The image is certainly not even a Hari-Hara manifestation and is clearly a Vishnu figure.

The *Ithihasa Mala* then states that the local ruler was fully convinced by the arguments and gave his award in favour of the Vaishnavas. Before this, to put the matter beyond doubt, Ramanuja is said to have requested the King that the weapons of Vishnu and the weapons of Siva should be made and left in the temple and the matter left for finalisation by the Lord of Tirumalai Himself. Accordingly the weapons of Vishnu and Siva were placed before the Lord and the temple doors closed. That night Ramanuja is said to have approached the Lord as Adisesha and prayed to the Lord to assume the Vaishnavite weapons. And Lo! when the temple doors were opened the next morning, the Lord was found wearing the conch and the chakra! This legend from the *Ithihasa Mala* informs us that the controversy about the Hari-Hara character of the Lord existed even in the 12th century. Sri Ramanuja, himself a Srivaishnava, seems to have made up his mind to worship the Lord at Tirumalai as Lord Vishnu. The Saivite pandits of his age were certainly no match to this genius and Sage of Visistha Advaita, and there is no wonder that he won in the battle

of wits, puranic lore and yogic powers and arranged for the worship of the Lord of Tirumalai from thenceforth as VISHNU.

Another current view about the Lord of Tirumalai is that the image is the representation of a female deity. Holders of this view usually quote a verse from the *Devi Bhagavatam* which describes the Lord as 'Sri Venkateswari', the only deity for Kaliyuga. Certain practices in the temple such as the use of turmeric paste for the abhishekam of the Lord, the fact that the abhishekam for the Mula Vigraham is done on Fridays, the fact that 'tomala seva' is called 'Bhagavati Aradhana' and that Srisukta mantras are read during this abhishekam of the Lord are relied upon by them to make out a case that the Lord is Shakti or Kali or Durga. Uniquely enough, the temple Vimanam has the 'Sakteya symbols' on it—the lion—and not the Garuda, as one would normally expect. The Lord is called 'Bala' or 'Balaji' in the north and as 'Bala' stands for a girl, these contend that the presiding deity at Tirumalai is the Divine Prakriti Herself.

Again, out of the several conflicting views about the nature of the Lord's image, the view that the Lord is a Hari-Hara Murthi is perhaps nearer the Truth, as the image combines the qualities of Vishnu and Siva. The fact that the deity is primarily being worshipped as Lord Vishnu from Ramanuja's time in the 12th century, would not in anyway detract the case of the supporters of the above view, for the Lord has always been considered even during this period as Vyakta Vishnu and Vyakta-Avyakta Siva. The peculiarities of the Lord's image make us pause and consider whether the Lord of Tirumalai is really not a combination of Siva and Vishnu. The image has four arms; the upper two arms do not really have the chakra and sankha as inte-

gral parts of the image. These would appear from tradition as well as from the traditional accounts of the *Sri Venkatachala Ithihasa Mala* to have been fixed on the Lord's hands by Sri Ramanuja during one of his three visits to Tirumalai in the 12th century A.D. The characteristics of the image namely the crescent-moon mark on the makuta of the Lord, the *Jata Jutas* or matted locks common to Siva, the nagabharanams and the cobra on the right arm of the Lord, certain other peculiar customs followed in the temple such as worship by using 'bilva', the presence of the Sakteya symbols on the Vimanam of the temple, the fact that a Garuda shrine came to be constructed in the temple only after the fifteenth century are all strong pointers that the Lord has several 'Saiva' Gunas or aspects.

Several Puranas no doubt say that Venkatachalam is a Vishnu Kshetram. The Sveta-Varaha Murthi and the Lord Venkateswara are the deities of Tirumalai. The acceptance of the Lord as a 'Hari-Hara Murti' will in no way conflict with the claim of the Puranas that Venkatachalam is a Vishnu Kshetram. The Lord's Hill also bears the name Srisailam and Srisailam is a hill sacred to Lord Siva. According to Sri Dave "In the famous Dwadasa Jyotirlinga stotra of Sri Sankaracharya, there is a description of Mallikarjuna on the Srisaila Mountain which is part of the Seshachalam Hills and Srisaila itself is used as a name for Tirupati."[1] It is true that the Puranas view the range of hills from Tirupati to Srisailam, famous for its Mallikarjuna Temple as one unit. According to Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar[2] "some of the Puranas dealing with the holy shrine at Tirupati liken the range of hills, the Nallamalais and their continuation, to a huge cobra lying about at ease, of which al-

1. *Immortal India*, Vol. I, by J. H. Dave, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1957.
2. *History of Tirupati*, Vol. I & II, T. T. Devasthanam, 1952.

most the end of the tail is marked by the great Siva shrine of Srisailam not far from the Krishna river, beyond the 16th degree of north latitude and a considerable way down the river from Kurnool. Coming up on the back of this huge snake one next strikes the Vishnu shrine of Ahobilam which is at the beginning of the trunk of the snake. At the back of the hood stands the hill of Tirupati, and almost at the opening of the mouth again the great Siva shrine of Kalahasti. This Puranic description is rather graphic and accurate, although the features marked happen to be only the four holy places of Kalahasti, Tirupati, Ahobilam and Srisailam. We mentioned already the cluster to the west being called Seshachalam hills; probably the name is given from this feature of the whole group lying about like a snake, or rather a cobra lying at ease in the Sun. This curious feature probably had its own share in creating the peculiar impression upon people journeying from a distance, and is probably responsible for the names given which, at first sight, may seem fanciful".

From an objective and scientific point of view the evidence in the Puranas again should be taken with caution. Every research student in the Puranas is aware of the innumerable interpolations and changes made in them and hence the legendary accounts in Puranas can only be informative and not authoritative. The Puranic evidence and statements have also no relevance and need no consideration when we accept the claim that the Lord's image is a self-manifested One.

We have then the more reliable evidence of the Alwars. It is well-known that the early Alwars who were themselves Vaishnavas have in the songs composed by them conceded the 'Hari-Hara' aspects of the Lord of Tirumalai. Thus Poygai Alwar sings about the Lord of Tirumalai as follows:

"His name, Aran (Hara) and Naranan (Narayana); His vehicle, the bull and the bird; His word, the book and Marai; His house of residence, the hill (Kailasa) and the waters (ocean); His function, destruction and protection, the weapon in hand, the trident-spear and the disc. His form, though One, is Fire and dark cloud."[1]

There are several other verses by the above Alwar in the same strain.

The two other Alwars, Bhutam Alwar and Pay Alwar, have sung several verses in the same strain.

"He has in his form the flowing matted locks (jatai) the high peaked crown, the shining dagger and the chakram, the snake coiling him, and the golden sutram round his waist. In Him, my Father on Tirumalai, the two forms have gracefully blended into One."[2]

"The golden-hued Holy One (Siva) and the One who rose to the skies to encompass this earth, Trivikrama Vishnu, the two may pass as separate Ones, but the one is really in the other."[3]

Nammalvar himself concedes the unity of the One—that the Lord of Tirumalai is a combination of Rudra, Brahma etc.

"He has merged in Himself Rudra, Brahma and Lakshmi after losing their separate entity. He pierced by his growth the highest heavens to encompass the creation. Is there a Higher Divinity than that of Vishnu ?"[3]

Some of the views of the nature of the Lord Venkateswara's image have been indicated above. Devotees who flock to Lord Venkateswara at Tirumalai worship him in

1. *History of Tirupati* by Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, (1952) page 30.
2. Pay Alwar's verses quoted from pages 69-70, *History of Tirupati* by Sri T.K.T. Veera Raghavacharya (1953).
3. *History of Tirupati* by Sri T. K. T. Veera Raghavacharya, (1953), p. 70.

various forms as their 'Ishta Daivam' as Lord Vishnu, Skandha or Subrahmanya, Siva, Sakthi, a combination of the Trimurthis Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, or as Venkateswara a combination of Hari and Hara. There can be no finality in the arguments of any of these devotees nor is it desirable to pursue such arguments of conflict and impertinence when the Lord is One and Only One.

In the *Krishna Avatar Tattvam,*[1] the Lord has made it clear that there is no difference between Hari and Hara and that they are One. From the Gita, we learn that there is one God and that this Lord is manifested everywhere.

From the Hindu point of view, the Lord is ONE and answers devotees by whatever name the Lord's *Chaitanyam* or Active Principle is invoked. Lord Venkateswara is this Absolute One.

Lord Venkateswara thus is the Lord of Lords, the One and only God. And as the One, He answers those who turn to him and pray to him. He is our father in Heaven of the Christian faith, the Allah of the Islamic faith, and the One that goes by various names in the Hindu pantheon and the numberless other paths in the Universe that lead to Him. He is the Narayana, the All pervading One, a Katyavalambita Murthi, who protects and releases all from bondage. *Sarva Dharman Parityajya Mamekam Saranam Vraja* is the message of this Absolute One, who says 'Seek Me the One for thy protection and I shall deliver thee from sin and bondage.' May this Lord bless us all; *Sarvey Jana Sukhino Bhavanthu.*

1. *Krishna Avatar Tattvam* by Janamanchi Seshadri Sarma in XI Volumes (Telugu). According to the *Padma Purana,* Vishnu, Brahma and Siva are considered to be one; devotees to Vishnu are enjoined to possess Bhakti for Vishnu, Siva and Brahma, as they are all manifestations of the One.

CHAPTER III

THE DEITIES OF THE GARBHA GRIHA

In the preceding chapter we have mentioned that the figure of Sri Lakshmi forms an integral part of the Mula Murti of Tirumalai. The Lord of Tirumalai is decorated daily with flowers and ornamented with several precious jewels, apparel and other paraphernalia. These latter include a big emerald 3″ in diameter called 'Meru Paccha' considered to be the biggest emerald in the world, a gold crown decked with precious gems, makara kundalams or gold ear-rings shaped like a crocodile, gold covers studded with precious gems for the conch and the chakra, a necklace containing a pair of tiger claws, mounted in gold case, a *makara kanti,* two nagabharanams or cobra jewels in gold for the arms of the Lord, a Lakshmi-garland—a big necklace with 108 Lakshmi images depicted on it, a Tulasi necklace, a Salagrama garland which contains Salagramas encased in gold on which the Sri Venkateswara Sahasranamas are engraved, a vanki-like gold ornament near the knees, a pair of gold anklets, several gold necklaces with alluring patterns and designs, a cobra-jewel just below the chest portion, gold covers studded with gems for the Varada and Katyavalambita hasthas, a sword by name Suryakatari, a yagnopavitam in gold, gold covers for the two feet of the Lord, an exquisitely carved Dasavatara belt around the waist depicting the Lord's ten incarnations (the Suryakatari actually hangs from this belt) along with two gold sculptured plaques of Shri Lakshmi and Padmavati on the chest of the Lord. The Shri Lakshmi plaque is exhibited on the right chest of the Lord. It is relevant to note here that the *Vishnu Purana* mentions how Shri Lakshmi

became the Vakshasthala Lakshmi (the one that resides on the chest of Lord Vishnu). It is said that Shri Lakshmi came out of the cosmic ocean when the Devas and Asuras were churning it, to obtain nectar or Amritam, and that Shriman Narayana then made Her his spouse. This episode is beautifully described in the *Narayaneeyam* as follows[1] :

जगदीश भवत्परा तदानीं कमनीया कमला बभूव देवी ।
अमलामवलोक्य यां विलोलः सकलोऽपि स्पृहयाम्बभूव लोकः ।।

Oh! Lord of the Universe! Then arose (out of the ocean) the charming Goddess Kamala that is yours. Seeing her spotless and pure (beauty), everyone became unsteady and longed for her.

त्वयि दत्तहृदे तदैव देव्यै त्रिदशेन्द्रो मणिपीठिकां व्यतारीत् ।
सकलोपहृताभिषेचनीयै ऋषयस्तां श्रुतिगीर्भिरभ्यषिञ्चन् ।।

To that Goddess whose heart was lost to thee, Devendra offered a (Manipeetam)—a throne of gems; the sages crowned her chanting the Vedas (using) the articles brought by all.

अभिषेकजलानुपातिमुग्धत्वदपाङ्गैरवभूषिताङ्गवल्लीम् ।
मणिकुण्डलपीतचेलहारप्रमुखैस्तामममरादयोऽन्वभूषन् ।।

Decked by the Gods with ear ornaments set with gems, Peet vastrams and other such articles, She is bedecked by thy sidelong lovely glances falling on her simultaneously with that of the water drops of the coronation ceremony.

वरणस्त्रजमात्तभृङ्गनादां दधती सा कुचकुम्भमन्दयाना ।
पदशिञ्जितमञ्जुनूपुरा त्वां कलितव्रीडविलासमाससाद ।।

The Kucha-Kumbha-Mandayana, that is the one whose gait is slow due to the burden of her large-sized breasts

1. A Sanskrit work of rare excellence by the Kerala poet and devotee of the Lord of Guruvayur, Sri Narayana Bhattathiripad, who lived in the early years of the 16th century A.D.

holds the marriage garland with the buzzing bees clustering round it, and with her anklets tinkling charmingly on her feet, She approached you with coyness.

गिरिशद्रुहिणादि सर्वदेवान् गुणभाजोऽप्यविमुक्तदोषलेशान् ।
अवमृश्य सदैव सर्वरम्ये निहिता त्वय्यनयाऽपि दिव्यमाला ।।

Discarding Gods like Shiva, Brahma and others with merit but who are not beyond all blame, She garlanded you, the eternal 'Ramya' murthi.

उरसा तरसा ममानिथैनां भुवनानां जननीमनन्यभावाम् ।
त्वदुरोविलसत्तदीक्षणश्रीपरिवृष्ट्या परिपुष्टमास विश्वम् ।।

And you quickly honoured her with thy embrace; and the mother of the Universe thinking ever of Thee and showering her glances on thee and shining on thy 'Vaksha' or chest made the worlds prosperous.

The Sri Lakshmi-murti on the Lord's chest is represented—as is usual with such figures represented individually —as a seated image in the Padmasana or lotus pose. She has four arms; the two upper arms hold lotus buds; the right lower arm is in the *abhaya* pose, the one in which she guarantees freedom from fear to her devotees. The other lower arm on the left is in the *Varada hasta* pose.

As already indicated, Sri Padmavathi who is no other than Adi Lakshmi adorns the Lord's left chest. Padmavathi is worshipped as Alarmel Mangai in the Padmavathi temple at Tiruchanur near Tirupati. She is the Mangai who emerged out of the lotus pond at Tiruchanur on a lotus and hence her name Alarmel Mangai or Padmavathi. This figure has also four arms; the upper two arms hold lotus buds while the lower arms are depicted in the *abhaya* and *Varada* hasta poses as in the case of Sri Lakshmi. According to the *Venkatachala Ithihasa Mala*—a Sanskrit work of the 12th century A.D., Sri Ramanuja, the propounder of

the Visishtadvaita doctrine of philosophy, made a gold necklace containing the image of Padmavathi and put it round the neck of the Lord of Tirumalai. This must have been a few years before his death in 1137 A.D.

In addition to the above murthies, there are several other deities in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. They are described below in brief.

1. **Manavalapperumal or Bhoga Srinivasa** (THE KAUTUKABERAM) : This is a silver replica of the *mula vigraha;* the conch and chakra however are not detachable in this murthi as in the case of the mula vigraha. The idol has a six-pointed yantram installed on it. This image is the Bhoga Srinivasa. It is in the standing or sthanaka pose with four arms; the two upper arms hold the chakra and the conch, the two lower arms are in the *Varada* and *Katyavalambita* poses. This idol receives all the *Bhogams* and *Upacharams* or services in the temple and is an idol which by its very nature can give material prosperity and such-like boons to devotees. This idol is to be seen near the *mula vigraham.*

This image was made and consecrated in the temple in the year 966 A.D. The donor was the Pallava Queen Samavai and the inscription recorded at the instance of the princess on the northern wall of the first temple prakaram, which is perhaps the earliest in Tirumalai, runs as follows[1] :—

"Hail, Prosperity! In the 14th year of the reign of Koppatra-Mahendra-Panmar, I, Samavai alias Kadavan-Perundevi, queen of Sattivitankan (Sakti-vitankan) alias Sri Kadapattigal and daughter of Pallavapperkadaiyar, founded this charity, so as to last as long as the moon and the sun endure, having arranged for the daily propitiation

1. Vol. I *Early Inscriptions*, T. T. Devasthanam Inscriptions, 1931, pp. 13 to 15.

(*Nimandam*) with 4 *Nali* of cooked rice (*Tiruvamudu*) and one perpetual lamp (*Nandavilakku*) for the conduct of ablutions (*Tirumanjanam*) on the two Ayana-Sankranti and the two Vishnu-Sankranti (days) and for the celebration of the Purattasi festival wherein to conduct a festival for two days before the commencement of the (main) festival, and to conduct the (main) festival for nine days beginning with the seed-sowing (*Tirumulaiyatti*) on the day of Chittirai (star), for the Manavalapperumal (image) made of silver and installed in the *Tiruvilankoyil* after performing special worship for the God presiding over the sacred Venkata Hill and after presenting for the consecrated silver image:

(1) crown (tirumudi) containing 23 diamonds, 16 big pearls, 2 big central rubies and 3 cut rubies, in all 5 rubies;

(2) 2 ornaments (of the shape of the) makara and 1 pair of coral *Koppu* for the two holy ears;

(3) 4 strings (malai) for the holy neck into which are set 14 diamonds, rubies, 11 big pearls and many (small) red pearls;

(4) 1 belt (udarabandhanam) of gold;

(5) 1 girdle (tiruvarai-pattikai) with 4 rubies;

(6) 2 circular ornaments for the arms (bahuvalayam);

(7) 4 bracelets (tiruchchandam) set with 2 cut rubies;

(8) 4 circular ornaments (valaiyal) for the holy neck;

(9) 2 solid anklets for the holy feet, being ornaments made of gold set with precious stones, corals and pearls, totalling 52 articles;

(10) 2 anklets with belts (padachayalam and 1 luminous disc (prabha) of silver set with 1 big central ruby; the gold used in making these articles being 47 *Kalanju*:

and the land given to this Manavalapperumal, for whom

all these (ornaments) were presented and ablutions were also conducted and who was consecrated, comprises the pieces of land purchased from the Sabhaiyar of Tiruchchukanur situated in the Tirukkudavur-nadu in Sri Venkatakottam and from Lakshmananambi residing in the Matham and for which was also paid money to the God Tiruvilankoyil-Perumal and which was made tax-free; the piece of land purchased from the Sabhaiyar; the pieces of land known as *Nandi-Erippatti, Madupputtai, Lakshmananambi-Adaikonda-Nilam* (land held by *Lakshmananambi*) *Madhusudan-Aviyarai* and *Purushottamanpatti*, aggregating to 3 patti of land; measured with the *Kadikkai-Kol* (measuring pole) and reckoned to be 3000 *Kuli* as equated with the rod of 16 spans; and this land has been purchased after paying the purchase money to the Sabhaiyar and to the deity, and made tax-free and presented to serve for the propitiation of Manavalapperumal.

"All these services the managers of the temple (*Madapatyam*) on Tiruvenkatam shall have conducted and the Sabhaiyar shall protect the land from being taxed.

"The feet of those that protect this charity shall be borne on my head. The protection of the Srivaishnavas (is sought for this). This is the writing of Sattandai."

The Pallava Queen Samavai also endowed the temple with lands in Tiruchchukanur (the present Tiruchanur)[1] towards expenses for conducting a festival twice a day prior to Margali-tirudvadasi (Mukkoti-dvadasi).

The idol was consecrated in the Snapana or Tiruvilankoyil mantapam of the temple. The consecration was done by keeping open a power line consisting of gold and silver cords in between the mula murthi and the bhoga murthi. The power line exists to this day. The daily ritua-

1. *T. T. Devasthanam Inscriptions*, Vol. I, pp. 16-17.

listic worship of the Lord of Tirumalai appears to have become more regular from the time of the consecration of this Bhoga Srinivasa.

This image gets abhishekam every morning to the accompaniment of mantras. It is anointed with perfumed oils and given baths of milk, sandal-wood paste, honey, turmeric etc. At night this deity is put to bed during a seva called the Ekantha Seva, when the idol is placed on a silver cradle-bed in the Sayana mantapam or Mukha mantapam before the Garba Griha; milk etc. are offered during the ceremony to the accompaniment of music and songs composed originally by Tallapaka poets. Scented sandalwood paste is also applied to the image at night every day as a daily ritual. The Ekantha Seva Bhogam is performed to the idol only for eleven months, Dhanurmasa Ekantha Seva being reserved for the Krishna idol described separately.

2. **The processional image of Sri Malayyappan Swami or Malaikuniyaninran Perumal:**—(Utsava Murthi):—Shri Malayyappan Swami or Malai Kuniya Ninran Perumal is the processional deity of the Lord of Tirumalai at present. The image is a standing figure and a replica of the mula-vigraha. The two upper arms hold the chakra and the conch; the lower right arm is in the *Varada hasta* pose and the lower left arm in the *Katyavalambita* pose. The image is richly decked with precious gems and jewels made of platinum and gold. The image does not stand alone; Sridevi and Bhudevi images accompany the Utsava murthi. The deity is about 3 feet high, and stands on a lotus pedestal and platform (about 14 inches high). To the right of the deity is Sridevi, in the standing pose. The deity would be about 29" high, the pedestal on which she is standing being about 4" high. This is also a pancha-loha figure. The deity has two hands, the left hand being in the *Kataka hasta* pose, that is the one

in which she holds a flower, usually a lotus. No lotus however is held by her actually. The right hand hangs loosely rather gracefully and the fingers are held in the *Gajakarna* pose (Prasaritha Dakshina Hastha). The other consort of the Lord, Bhudevi is also in the standing pose and is similar to that of Sridevi. The only difference is in the pose of the hands. Here it is the right hand that is in the *Kataka hasta* pose and the left hand hangs loosely and gracefully and the fingers assume the Gajakarna mudra—(Prasaritha Vama Hastha). The earliest mention of this image on the temple inscriptions is near about the period 1339 A.D. One inscription found on the north wall of Sri Varada Raja Swami shrine in Tirumalai temple, reads as follows: "Hail, Prosperity! In the 19th year of the reign of Tribhuvana Chakravarthi Nayanar Sriranganatha Yadavarayar, for the purpose of *Malaikuniyaninran Perumal and Nachchimar* being seated in the chediyarayan-Pumantapam....etc.." indicates conclusively the existence of the processional image Malai Kuniya Ninran and his two consorts, about the period mentioned. According to legend, the image with the accompanying consorts was found in a mountain glade and hence the name Malai Kuniya Ninran. Malai Kuniya Ninran also appears to be one of the names by which the Lord of Tirumalai was known in the early ages i.e. the One who stood on a hill which 'bowed very low'. According to Sri Veera Raghavacharya,[1] this image is no other than the Pancharatra Tiruvilankoyil Perumal of Tiruchukanoor and the Koluvu Srinivasa (described below) the image of Tirumantra Salaipperumal of Tiruchchekanoor.

3. **Ugra Srinivasa or Venkatatturaivar:**—(Snapana Murthi). Ugra stands for anger and this image of Ugra

1. *History of Tirumalai* in two Volumes by Sri T. K. T. Veera Raghavacharya, published by the T. T. Devasthanam, 1953.

Srinivasa typifies the destroying aspect of the Lord. This is perhaps the earliest image of Tirumalai temple not taking into account the mula-vigraha of the Lord, and was the processional image of the Lord of Tirumalai in the earlier ages. The image is about 1½ feet high and is standing on a pedestal of about 7" high. Later it was superseded by the Malayappan idol. The chakra in this image is held by the deity in a slightly tilted condition which could perhaps be called the Prayoga Chakra. The Prayoga Chakra Mudra is one in which the chakra is held as if it is to be used immediately. The deity has two consorts, Sridevi and Bhudevi, both standing figures, having two hands, one in the *Kataka hasta* pose and the other hanging loosely and gracefully. The Nachiyar images would be about 16 to 18" high. The image at present is brought out in procession only once a year and that too rather clandestinely before the dawn on Kartika Dwadasi day. According to the Vaishnava archakas, the rays of the Sun should not touch this murthi; if that happens, it will culminate in the end of the world!

4. **Koluvu Srinivasa** (Bali Beram):—This image is the Koluvu Srinivasa or the Durbar Srinivasa, who holds court everyday in the temple in the Tirumamani mantapam. His functions are akin to that of a guardian deity in the temple. He supervises and keeps himself posted with all receipts of revenue of the temple. He is not interested in the expenditure aspect and thus combines in himself only some of the more pleasing functions of the Accountant-General and the Public Accounts Committees of today!

The image is sometimes called Bali Beram. This deity holds court after Tomala Seva is performed to the Lord of Tirumalai. The deity has a Simha Toranam around Him. He has a silver chair and a gold umbrella. The almanac

is daily read out to Him. The collections made in the Hundi of the temple are reported to Him everyday.

5. **Sri Krishna Image:**—The Garbha Griha has also a beautiful image of Lord Krishna in the *Navanita Nritya* pose along with his consort Rukmini. In the *Navanita Nritya* pose, Lord Krishna is shown as a dancing child standing on his left foot on a lotus pedestal; the left leg is gracefully bent at the knee. The right leg is lifted and does not rest on the pedestal. It is also bent at the knee. The right hand holds a ball of navanita or butter, while the left hand is stretched out gracefully in a beautiful dancing pose.

Mention of this image is made in the temple inscriptions first in the year 1100 A.D. The other inscriptions refer to the offerings made to Krishna on Sri Jayanti day and also during the several Bramhotsavams. This image receives the Ekantha Seva in the temple in Dhanurmasam instead of the Bhoga Srinivasa idol. The Bhoga Srinivasa receives the Ekantha Seva services during the rest of the year.

6. **Sri Rama image with Sita, Lakshmana and Sugriva:**—Four copper icons of Sri Raghunatha (Rama), Sita. Lakshmana and Sugriva also find place in the sanctum sanctorum. These images were in all probability installed in the 12th century A.D. by Ramanuja, as the *Sri Venkatachala Ithihasa Mala* mentions a legend about the installation of the deities. Sri Raghunatha is however mentioned in the available inscriptions only in 1476 A.D. The image of Sri Rama is in madhyama tala and in the tribhanga pose; the left arm is raised to hold the bow and the right arm gracefully slopes downwards to hold an arrow. The image is in the standing pose and has a kireetam or crown on it. The image of Mother Sita is to the right of Sri Rama and is in the standing pose. Her right hand is gracefully extended downwards; her left hand holds a lotus bud. The

Lakshmana or Ramanuja image is a smaller replica of the Sri Rama figure, with crown and jewels to suit. The Sugriva figure is in the standing pose and in the *anjali hasta* pose —the one in which the hands are folded in an attitude of prayer.

Beautiful copper figures of Angada and Hanuman are exhibited separately in the Ramar Medai platform outside the shrine in the Antarala mantapam. Opposite them are equally beautiful copper images of Vishwaksena, Ananta and Garuda which are worth seeing.

7. **The Chakrattalwar:**—The Sudarshana Chakra or Chakrattalwar also figures in the sanctum sanctorum. This deity always precedes the Utsavamurthi in processions and his functions may be likened to those of a pilot-God going on his security rounds before the Lord comes out in majestic godly procession.

CHAPTER IV

THE TEMPLE AND ITS SCULPTURES

It shall be our object in this chapter to make a brief study of the temple as it exists at present and appreciate the several beautiful bas-reliefs and sculptures in the temple. The historical background will also be studied in brief. The Vimanam on the sanctum of the temple famous as the Anandanilaya Vimanam and the sanctity of the Vengadam hill will be discussed separately.

The sketch given at the end gives the topography of the temple proper. It is seen that the temple covers an area of about two acres and is rectangular in shape (with sides 413 feet long and 263 feet wide). There are two Gopurams—the Outer and Inner Gopurams—in the temple on the two outer prakarams. The circumambulatory path between the outer and inner Gopurams is the Sampangi Pradakshinam and the circumambulatory path between the inner Gopuram and the main shrine is the Vimana Pradakshinam. A third and incomplete path around the sanctum is the Mukkoti Pradakshinam.

The outer Gopuram:—The main gateway of the temple called Mukha Dwaram is about 11 feet wide. Direct inscriptional evidence is not available to fix the date of construction of this Gopuram. An early inscription[1] in Tamil of the Queen of Yadavaraya[2] Vira Narasimha Devar found

1. *T. T. D. Epigraphicals Series,* 11/7. Vol. I *Early Inscriptions* (1931) No. 381 T.T. p. 116.
2. The Yadavarayas flourished in Tondamandalam comprising of the areas of Kalahasti, Tirupati, Karvetinagaram, and portions of Chingleput and Chittoor Districts of the present Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu States. They were devotees of the Lord of Tirumalai and Lord Siva of Kalahasti.
   Adopted with modifications from the T. T. D. Epigraphical Report.

on the right side front face of the Gopuram reads as follows: "Hail, Prosperity: In the 12th year of the reign of Tribhuvanachakravartigal Sri Yadavaraya Vira-Narasingadevar, (his) queen Yadavaraya Nachchiyar presented 64 cows and 2 bulls for 2 *Nandavilakku* for Tiruvenkatam-udaiyan in the month of Panguni. This (service) shall continue as long as the moon and the sun last. May (this) the Srivaishnavas protect!" This inscription would indicate that the Gopuram was in existence or was in the process of construction in the early years of the thirteenth century. The Gopuram has apparently been renovated in the modern times and the figures on the Gopuram at present appear to be covered by white cement and look crude and modern. A figure of Gandhiji, the father of the Indian Nation, also finds place on the Gopuram as it stands at present.

PRATIMA MANTAPAM

Statue of Venkatapatiraya and others:—On entering through the Mukha Dwaram, the first big mantapam to our left is the Ranganayakula mantapam. A small mantapam, adjacent to the Ranganayakula mantapam which may be called the Pratima Mantapam houses several statues of royal devotees. On the left side of the mantapam (to our left as we enter the temple) are three statues. One is a copper statue of King Venkatapatiraya. This figure is about five feet high and is standing on a copper pedestal about two feet high. The crown worn by the King is about 12 inches high. The figure is bare-chested and wears large-sized pearls in the ears. A Rudrakshamala in two rows is worn on his neck. He wears an embroidered loin cloth. He has a beautiful katibandham around his waist. Portions of his ankles and legs are naked. There are a pair of anklets on the figure which is in the *anjali hasta* pose. In T.T. Devastha-

nams Inscription[1] No. 671 found on the south wall of the third Prakara in Tirumalai temple, King Venkatapatiraya is mentioned as 'Sriman Maharajadhiraja, Rajaparameswara, Sri Veera Pratapa, Sri Veera Sringarayadeva, Maharaya'. He was a great devotee of Lord Venkateswara, his Guru being one Kumara Tatacharya. He was known as Venkata-I and was an Araveedu dynasty king. He governed the Chandragiri Rajya as Viceroy for some years. He did not make any endowments to the temple in his name. He however, seems to have issued coins bearing the figure of the Lord of Tirumalai with the inscription 'Sri Venkatesaya Namaha'. He was at Chandragiri in the year 1572, and the statue itself can be safely said to belong to the 16th century.

Next to this statue of Venkatapatiraya, are two beautiful statues of the Vijayanagar King Achutaraya and his Queen Varadaraji Amma. Both these figures are in the *anjali hasta* pose. The King's statue is about 64" high and wears the Vaishnavite vadagalai mark. There are three necklaces on his neck, one of which appears to be made of pearls. He has a loin cloth gracefully tied around his waist covering his figure up to the knees. He wears ornaments on his hands, shoulders and feet. The figure of his consort is about 54" high from the top of platform on which she is standing. This is the most graceful and beautiful statue—barring of course the Mula murthi—found in the Lord's temple. Graceful garments—the saree and the blouse cover her body without hiding her magnificent chest. The figure is very delicately carved. The feet are slender and beautiful. Her hair is prettily made up. Her eyes are in the *samadrishti* pose and the circular ear-rings she wears augment her beauty. She wears three necklaces and several other ornaments on her shoulders, waist, etc.

1. *T. T. D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. VI, Part I, Inscriptions of Venkatapatiraya's time, pp. 26-41.

King Achyutaraya was the half brother and successor of Sri Krishnadevaraya on the throne of Vijayanagar. He was a devotee of Lord Venkateswara and made several rich endowments to the temple. He appears to have visited the temple at least thrice. He was actually coronated once in the Tirumalai temple. During his first visit to the temple (31-1-1533), he performed *archana* for the Lord himself while the priests recited the *Srinivasa sahasranamam*. This is recorded in an inscription[1] on the south wall of the third prakara in Tirumalai temple, as follows:—"Hail, Prosperity! this is the *silasasanam* executed by the trustees of Tirumalai, as ordered by the emperor Achyutaraya Maharaya on Friday, combined with the star Asvini, being the 7th lunar day of the dark fortnight of Kumbha month in the year Nandana, current with the Saka year 1454, while Sriman Maharajadhiraja, Rajaparameswara, Sri Veera Pratapa, Sri Veera Achyutaraya Maharaya was ruling the earth. The following[2] valuable ornaments were presented to Sri Venkatesa by the emperor as his *ubhayam* while he himself was perform-

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical series,* Vol. IV, Inscriptions of Achyutaraya's time pp. 35-36.
2. 2 pairs of.....made of superior gold.
   1 pair of ornaments intended for daily decoration of His eyes.
   1 string of Tanikky beads made of pure gold weighing 10 units of big stone.
   1 pair of Valitilaikkay beads made of pure gold weighing 10 units of big stone.
   .....ornament containing 900 pearls.
   1 big Kapha (garment for the body) containing 200 pearls, 33 rubies, 10 emeralds and 18 diamonds.
   4 Bahuwalayam (ornaments for shoulders).....
   1 pair of ornaments for the head containing 122 pearls, 16 rubies, 2 emeralds and 4 diamonds including 11 selected gems, altogether weighing.....
   1 Kuttam ornament for the sikharam or tower set with 709 blue pearls, 3 emeralds, 30 rubies, 1 sapphire.....
   1 necklace containing 600 pearls and 10 units of superior gold.....altogether weighing 31 weights of gold including gold strings.....in total 785 gold weights including the sarigai or lace made of 8¾ carats of gold.

ing the *archana* for Sri Venkatesa and while the archakas (temple priests) were reciting the *Srinivasa Sahasranamam* (1008 appellations of God) in the presence of the queen Varadaraji Amma and her son Kumara Venkatadri.

After the performance of the Kapila-pasu (Kapilapasu-mahadana) and Svarna-Varsham (svarnameru-mahadana) the emperor presented the above-mentioned ornaments with snapana-tirumanjanam (holy bath) to Sri Venkatesa."

In addition to the above, Achyutaraya made several other presents to the temple. He instituted two new festivals, Lakshmidevi Mahotsavam for the Lord of Tirumalai and his consort, and the punarvasu tirunal for Sri Rama, Sita and Lakshmana deities in the temple. He constructed the granite steps for the Kapila thirtham in Tirupati. It is he that renamed Kapila thirtham as Chakra thirtham. He also deputed a number of damsels from Tirupati to serve Lord Venkateswara. His Queen Varadaraji Amma gifted away several villages to the temple.

Statues of Krishnadevaraya and his consorts—There are three statues of Krishnadevaraya and his consorts on the northern side of the Pratima Mantapam referred to above. These figures are made of bronze. The figure of Krishnadevaraya is about 68" high from the top of the crown to the lotus pedestal on which it is standing. The figure is bare-chested and is in the *anjali hasta* pose. The fingers on each hand wear two rings. There are ornaments on the hands, shoulders and the legs. The figure of the King is warrior-like and extremely graceful. The figure of Chinnadevi standing to his right is the best bronze figure in the temple. The queen is shown as wearing four necklaces in addition to the Mangala sutram. The blouse she wears, the bangles on her hands and the other ornaments give her peculiar grace

as well as charm. The figure of Tirumaladevi also in the *anjali hasta* pose is equally beautiful.

Sri Krishnadevaraya (1509-1530), the great Vijayanagar emperor, visited Tirumalai and worshipped the Lord at least seven times. He considered Lord Venkatewara as his patron God and dedicated his work *Amukthamalyada* to Him. He however was a devotee of Siva also and made several endowments to the Siva temples in the country. His first visit to the temple was in the year 1513 A.D. when he presented a crown of gold set with navaratnas (nine varieties of gems) and twenty five silver harati plates to the Lord. This is recorded in the inscription[1] dated 10-2-1513 A.D. which reads as follows: "Hail! May it be prosperous! On the 5th day of the bright fortnight of the Phalguna month, in the year Angira (Angirasa), corresponding with the Salivahana Saka era 1434, Sriman Maharajadhiraja, Rajaparamesvara, Sri Veera Pratapa Sri Veera Krishnaraya, Maharaya presented a Kiritam (crown made of gold) set with nine kinds of precious stones to God Tiruvengadanath (Sri Venkatesa) in the following description:—

1,555 weight of gold for the vommechchu work (basement work for setting the stones),

1,076 weight of solid gold selected for kundanam work,

2,822 rubies refined,

160 emeralds weighing 108 ratulu or carats,

423 old diamonds weighing 65 manjalu weight,

3 big rubies including the central ruby,

10 sapphires,

17 cats eyes,

1 topaz,

altogether weighing 3,130 units;

1,339 pearls weighing 163 ratulu or carats,

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. III, Inscriptions of Sri Krishnadevaraya's time, pp. 124-125.

1 string of pearls, gold wire into which the pearls are inserted, weighing 15 (units),

the total weight of the above-said crown 3,308

three-stringed necklace containing 1,370 jarimuttelu or blue-coloured pearls,

1 manikyam (gem),

2 sapphires,

2 kusulus,

15 addigas (small ornaments), weighing 225 ratulu,

1 padakam containing 6 big pearls,

60 diamonds,

11 emeralds,

3 manikyams,

5 rubies,

all weighing 61 (units of largest weight), and

25 silver plates for the purpose of karpura-harati, all these (the donor Krishnaraya Maharaya) presented for your decoration."

During his first visit as well as his second visit, which was also in the year 1513 A.D. he was accompanied by his two Queens. During his third visit he granted five villages to the Lord for nitya-naivedya purposes. The Sanskrit prasasti or introduction which precedes some of his inscriptions singing his praises, gives glowing accounts of his ancestry and some of the deeds performed by him. Sri Krishnadevaraya performed several religious charities at Srisailam, Ahobilam, Bezwada, Rajamundry, Amareswara, Kalahasti, Tirupati, Kanchi, Srirangam, Kumbakonam, Rameswaram, Gokarnam, etc. He constructed gopurams at Kalahasti, Tiruvannamalai, Chidambaram and put up pillars of victory at Simhachalam and Srikurmam. He was the greatest of the Vijayanagar emperors and was himself a man of letters and a patron of literature. His military exploits are too well

known to need detailed mention here. During his other visits he made several endowments to the Lord. He had the Divya vimana of the Lord's temple gilded with gold. Of his two queens, Tirumaladevi was the senior and Chinnadevi the junior. He married Annapurnadevi after Chinnadevi's death. From Nuniz however we learn that he had four wives; as an oriental potentate he must have espoused several other damsels. It is relevant to note here that Sri Krishnadevaraya's inscriptions in the temple are recorded in Telugu, Tamil, as well as Kanarese, indicating his overlordship of the area where these languages were spoken.

Sri Krishnadevaraya was the second son of Narasa Naika. He was crowned in the year 1510 A.D. He led successful campaigns against the Chiefs of Kanchi, Gangaraja of Ummettur in East Mysore, and Bijapur. He captured Udayagiri and Kondaveedu forts. He made three campaigns against Kalingas in the years 1513-1516 A.D. On the defeat of the Gajapati of Kalinga, Sri Krishnadevaraya assumed the title of Gajapati Sapthanga Harana i.e. the destroyer of the seven limbs of the Gajapati's sovereignty. He won a decisive battle in his conflict with Bijapur in the year 1520. The Portuguese chronicler Nuniz describes the camp of Krishnadevaraya at Raichur battle as follows: "It is a mystery how there is abundance of everything at Raichur, a barren and sandy place....Indeed no one who did not understand the meaning of what he saw will ever dream that a war was going on but would think that he was in a prosperous city." Nuniz also mentions that the King's table service ware consisted only of silver and gold vessels. Sri Krishnadevaraya was a staunch vaishnava, but he was also devoted to Lord Siva and patronised Saivas, Madhvas and Jains. He loved his people and was zealous in the advancement of literature and art. According to Paes, Sri Krishnadevaraya 'is the

most feared and perfect King that could possibly be, cheerful, dispassionate and very merry; he is one that seeks to honour foreigners and receives them kindly, asking about all their affairs whatever their condition may be. He is a great ruler and a man of much justice, but subject to sudden fits of rage .... He is by rank a greater lord than any, by reason of what he possesses in armies and territories, but it seems that he has (in fact) nothing compared to what a man like him ought to have, so gallant and perfect is he in all things."

Vijayanagar attained the height of prosperity and prestige during Sri Krishnadevaraya's time and he is the greatest of all the South Indian sovereigns.

Ranganayakula Mantapam:—To the left of the Pratima Mantapam, we notice a big mantapam called the Ranga mantapam measuing about 108′ north to south, and about 60′ east to west. A portion of this mantapam is at present being used for the office of the Peshkar of the T.T. Devasthanams and for the T.T. Devasthanams Publications Sales Depot.[1] The Lord's kalyanotsavam is sometimes performed in this mantapam. The mantapam has a small shrine about 12′ square which is kept closed always. This shrine was used to worship an utsava vigraham of Sri Ranganatha of Srirangam when the idol came as a refugee to the Tirumalai temple in the early years of the 14th century when the muslims were overrunning South India with iconoclastic sword and fire. The mantapam therefore is presumed to have been constructed about the year 1340-1350 by the local yadavaraya ruler Sri Ranganatha Yadavaraya. There is however no direct inscriptional evidence to show that Sri Ranganatha Yadavaraya constructed this mantapam.

1. These have been shifted after the recent accident, (in the year 1967 AD.).

An inscription[1] on the door jamb-wall of Padikkavali gopura in the temple indicates that King Yadava Sri Ranganatha constructed 'in his sixteenth regnal year a royal mansion for himself on the Venkata hill, abounding in flower gardens filled with honey-sucking bees....' His reign has been calculated to have begun during the period between 1336 and 1360 A.D. As he was the local monarch it is possible that the mantapam was constructed by him, especially when credence is given to the local legend that Sri Ranganatha utsava vigraham was brought and worshipped in the temple in the troubled years of that period. Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar[2] has also stated on the authority of Kovil Olugu—an account of the history of the temple at Srirangam—that the utsava vigraham in the temple was brought to Tirumalai hills for safety during the period of threatened Muslim invasion.

The Ranga mantapam is rather bald in sculptures and does not deserve special mention in this direction. Only the upper portions of a few pillars are worth noticing. The mantapam however is very large indicating that congregational worship was perhaps made in this premises, in the olden days.

Tirumalaraya mantapam:—The Tirumalaraya mantapam adjoins the Ranga mantapam and is about 108′ long and 40′ wide. Actually the mantapam can be demarcated into two portions, the southern portion constructed on an elevated basement and the northern portion at a much lower level. The southern portion was constructed by Saluva Narasimha in the middle of the 15th century. The southern mantapam is higher than the Rangaraya mantapam. This mantapam is unique in that it has a beautiful four-pillared sub-mantapam

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series*, Vol. I, Early Inscriptions (1931) page 138.
2. *History of Tirupati* by Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar.

in its middle. The pillars of this sub-mantapam are complex structures comprising of four pillars each—the major pillar being about 6″ square and the three minor pillars being almost circular in shape having about sixteen facets. The pillars depict warriors riding horses standing erect on their hind-feet over lions. The minor pillars which emit musical sounds when struck are themselves mounted on miniature lions. Some of the riders have attendants carrying umbrellas to denote their royal status. The bas-reliefs on the sub-mantapam are those of Sri Narasimhaswamy killing Hiranya-kasipu, Sri Lakshmi Narasimhaswamy in the standing pose giving abhaya to Prahlada, Srinivasa, Krishna dancing on the snake Kaliya, Sri Vishnu with Lakshmi seated on his lap, Vishnu riding on the Garuda and Sri Rama as Dhanurdhari Rama i.e. Sri Rama holding the kodanda or bow. The main pillars of the main mantapam show riders on lions while the lions themselves are depicted as standing on elephants. A particularly impressive bas-relief on one of the mantapam pillars is that of a couple in which the husband is consoling his grief-stricken wife. Another unique bas-relief depicts the Gopi-vastrapaharanam scene. Sri Krishna is shown as perched on a tree. He holds the clothes of the Gopikas in his hands. The Gopis in the nude are portrayed around the tree. One Gopi is shown as praying to the Lord with her hands held aloft on her head in the *anjali hasta* pose while another with more initiative is trying to climb the tree to retrieve her clothes. Another impressive bas-relief is that of Lord Krishna playing on the flute. He holds the flute with two hands. The figure which has two more hands holds the chakra and sankha (upper right hand holds the chakra while the upper left arm holds the sankha). A mesmerised herd of cows is also shown as listening to the divine music of Lord Krishna.

The southern or inner portion of the mantapam was constructed in the middle of 15th century for celebrating the Unjal festival (Swing festival). A festival called Dolamahotsava-anna-anjal-tirunal[1] was instituted by Saluva Narasimha in the year 1473 and we can safely presume that this festival was celebrated in the elevated southern portion of the Tirumalaraya mantapam. This mantapam was renovated later by Araviti Bukkaraja Ramaraja Srirangaraja Tirumalaraja in the 16th century and hence the name Tirumalaraya mantapam. The relevant inscription[2] citing the construction of the mantapam is to be found on the east wall of the first Gopuram in the second prakara of Tirumalai temple. This inscription states that Tirumalaraja made provision for the celebration of the Dolotsavam or swing festival for Sri Venkatesa in the Salivahana Saka year 1483 (corresponding to 17th December, 1561 A.D.). In the prasasti, (eulogy) it is mentioned that he conquered the Turkish Chief Tulukkanam Alla. Other festivals like Vasanthotsavam were celebrated in this mantapam during Tirumalaraja's time. Sri Malayappan, the processional image of the Lord, holds durbar in this mantapam to this day during the Brahmotsavam festival days.

Saluva Narasimha, the king who constructed the southern portion of the Tirumalaraya mantapam—also called Saluvaraya mantapam, commenced his career as the hereditary Governor of Chandragiri. He was the ablest warrior of the Vijayanagar empire. When the Government at headquarters became weak due to the assassination of Virupaksha II, he became the leader of a bloodless Saluva revolution and usurped the throne of Vijayanagar. This however turned

1. *T. T. D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. II, Inscriptions of Saluva Narasimha's time, 197 T.T. pp. 89-98.
2. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. VI, Part I, Inscriptions of Venkatapatiraya's time, pp. 1-11.

to be a revolution in the interests of the public. Saluva Narasimha strengthened the empire in many ways and became a great ruler. He was a lover of horses and imported horses from abroad. It is said that he was so liberal as to pay for such imported horses which died on the way to India. According to Nuniz, his total reign was for 44 years i.e. during the period between 1450 and 1493. He was a devout Vaishnava but also performed abhisekams to Lord Siva on the Shivaratri day. He is the author of the famous *Ramabhyudayam*. He was a patron of literary gems such as Pinaveerabhadra and Rajanatha Dindima. His titles in the early years were 'Mahamandaleswara Medinimeesaraganda Katari Saluva'. In later years he assumed royal titles such as 'Maha-Arasu' (Great King) and Rajadhiraja (King of Kings). Saluva actually means hawk and he was indeed a hawk among men. Ferista has described him "as a powerful Raja possessing the country lying between the Karnatic and Telingana, extending along the sea coast to Machilipatam." Tabataba has said that "owing to (his) numerous army, and the extent of the dominions he was the greatest and most powerful of all the rulers of Telingana and Vijayanagar with all the apparatus of war-elephants like mountains of iron" and defences "like the ramparts of Alexander."[1]

Saluva Narasimha as well as his Queen Srirangambadevi along with other members of the royal family made several endowments to the temple. Thus in the year 1453 an endowment was made to maintain Ramanujakutams in the temple for the free supply of prasadams to pilgrims. Provision also was made among others for the supply of the

1. From R. Satyanatha Iyyar's College Text book of Indian History.

following articles for the Periya Tiruppavadai[1] for the propitiation of the Periyapperumal, i.e. the Lord in the temple.

10 *Vatti* of Rice?
....25 *Nali* of ghee,
1 *Nali* and 1 *Uri* of pepper,
Salt, vegetables, curds,
500 areca-nuts and 500 betel-leaves,
½ *Tulam* of *Chandanam* (Sandal paste),
2 bottles of *Pannir* (rose-water),
2 *Vinai* of *Kasturi* (musk), and
30 *Kalanju* of saffron.

In inscription No. 66 T.T. found on the southern wall of the first prakaram of the Tirumalai temple, it is also shown that the King granted five villages in the Chandragiri Rajya for the Tiruvidaiyattam for Tiruvenkatamudaiyan. Arrangements were also made for the feeding of pilgrims visiting the temple. In inscription bearing No. 273 G.T. the king described as Sriman Sarvabhauma (universal monarch or emperor) Nrisimha, the son of Sri Veera Gundakshitipati, is shown as having installed "an image of the propitious Shri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy on the pathway over the Seshadri hill on 20th April, 1485."

The second king who is connected with this mantapam bearing his name, was the first of a ruling race belonging to the Araveedu family of the Vijayanagar kingdom. He acquired power as the Chief Minister of Sadasivaraya in 1565 A.D. after the death of his brother Aliya Ramaraja who was a great power in those days in the politics of Vijayanagar. The Hindu army was led in the famous battle of Rakshasa-Thangadi (battle of Tallikota in the year 1565) by this Tirumala, his brother Aliya Ramaraja and Venka-

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. II, Inscriptions of Saluva Narasimha's time, Inscription No. 54 T.T. found on the western wall of the first prakaram of the temple, pp. 53-55.

tadri. The battle was lost as a result of the treachery of two muslim generals in the Hindu army, according to Caesar Frederic. Ramaraja who fought valiantly though he was aged 96 years at the time, was wounded and killed in the battle. Tirumalaraja who himself lost an eye in the battle became the regent for the kingdom of Vijayanagar. The capital was transferred by him to Penukonda in Anantapur district in the year 1567. Sadasivaraya, the sovereign, was murdered in the year 1570 (by one of the sons of Tirumalaraya) and Tirumalaraya ascended the throne of Vijayanagar at Penukonda. In spite of this blemish on his escutcheon, we can say that Tirumalaraya tried his best to uphold and retrieve the prestige of the Vijayanagar empire which was at a low water mark as a result of its crushing defeat in the battle referred to. He was also a man of letters. His name is immortalised in the mantapam in the temple.

The statues of Lala Khamaram, his mother and wife:— In a portion of the Tirumalaraya mantapam we find three statues of Lala Khamaram (Thoder Malla), his mother Matha Mohana De and his wife Pitha Bibi. Their names are inscribed on the shoulders of the figures. The first two are brass-plated figures on wooden blocks while the third is a brass figure. Not much is known about these devotees who are all in the standing pose in the *anjali hasta* mudra. The figures have no aesthetic value and are also getting eroded by the action of time. Only the figure of Pitha Bibi is better preserved. She is shown as wearing a blouse and a vastram from the waist downwards. Her circular ear ornaments are impressive. The figure of Lala Khamaram has an impressive moustache and beard.

The other constructions in the Sampangi Pradakshinam on the north, south and west consist of mantapams or rooms which are used for storing provisions, idols of the Ratham

of the Lord etc. Thus the jaggery room is a room where jaggery is stored, the pattadai is a place where the Lord's prasadams are given and the Ramanuja Kutam a place where food is freely distributed to pilgrims. The Padipotu, a room next to Ramanuja Kutam, is a place where sweets, fried and baked preparations are made for the Lord. The room next to the Padipotu is the yamanothurai where flower garlands are made to specifications for the Lord of Tirumalai. The Theppai samans or the articles of the Lord's Theppai are also stored in the rooms on the northern portion of the Sampangi Pradakshinam.

The four small mantapams in the Sampangi Pradakshinam standing in the four different corners, were constructed by Saluva Narasimha in the 15th century. These mantapams were used formerly for seating the processional image of the Lord of Tirumalai and to offer food or Naivedyam to the deity for distribution later freely to all pilgrims.

AINAMAHAL AND PULA BHAVI

Moving a full round in the Sampangi Pradakshinam starting from the Tirumalaraya mantapam, we notice an important mantapam to the left of the Dhvajastambham (while we face east), which is the Aina Mahal or Hall of Mirrors. The Pula Bhavi is located to the north of this Mahal.

The Pula Bhavi:—Poovu in Telugu means a flower and Pula Bhavi means the Well of flowers. It is a step-well used for disposing of the used flowers and flower garlands of the temple. This practice was initiated by Sri Ramanuja when he visited the Tirumalai temple in the 12th century A.D. The connected legend is described in the *Venkatachala Ithihasa Mala*. According to this authority, Chakravarthi Thondaman was the local ruler in Kaliyuga. He was in the

habit of visiting the Lord of Tirumalai by using a subterranean passage called the Narasimhabilam. On one occasion the King pursued by his enemies rushed to the temple at mid-night for safety. The Lord of Tirumalai was sporting at this time with his consorts Sridevi and Bhudevi. Seeing the king entering the holy premises, Sridevi hid herself in the Vakshasthala of Srinivasa while Bhudevi sought refuge in the Pula Bhavi or Well of flowers dug by one Rangadasa for watering the flowers in the Nandanavanam or garden attached to the temple. This legend is mentioned in the *Varaha Purana* also. Sri Ramanuja after listening to this legend set up images of Srinivasa and Bhudevi on the step-well, and ordained that the used flowers, flower garlands, Tulasi etc. of the temple should from thence be dropped in the well in honour of Bhudevi.

Ainamahal:—It is a mantapam of later origin (37'.6 × 43') with a mukha mantapam before it. The mahal as it stands at present is fixed with huge reflecting mirrors. The mantapam is also fitted with innumerable electric lights. The illuminated Ainamahal is a beautiful sight.

Dhvajastambha Mantapam:—The next important mantapam in the Sampangi Pradakshinam which deserves our notice is the Dhvajastambha mantapam, which is the second mantapam as we enter from the Mukhadwaram or main door of the temple. The mantapam gets its name from the Dhvajastambham or the Lord's flag-pole installed in the mantapam. The Lord's Balipitham is also to be seen in this mantapam.

This mantapam is unique in that it has some lovely bas-reliefs on its pillars which most pilgrims miss. A unique bas-relief is that of a Trimurthi figure with four arms. The two upper arms hold the chakra and the sankha (chakra is in the right hand and the sankha in the left). The lower

right hand is in the *abhaya hasta* pose. The lower left hand is in the *katyavalambita* pose. The deity is seated on a bird which could either be a swan or a peacock. The figure is shown in the *sukhasana* pose with the right leg stretched on the bird while the left leg is shown as hanging down gracefully. Normally in the *sukhasana* pose which is a variation in the padmasana form, the right leg is shown as hanging down while the left leg is folded. This figure can easily be taken to be a representation of Shanmukha Skanda. The figure has vaishnavite weapons. This cannot however be a serious objection, as Skanda or Kumara Swamy is himself Vishnu.[1] The figure is beautifully carved and deserves notice.

There are several other figures of Srinivasa, Anjaneya and Yoga Narasimhaswamy on the pillars of this mantapam. There is one particularly impressive nude figure of a woman holding a suka or parrot in her right hand. A paricharika or a maid on her left is shown as removing the skirt of the main figure, from below the knee downwards. There is another figure of Krishna perched on a tree with the clothes of three Gopikas in his hands. The Gopikas are portrayed in the nude as praying for their clothes. One Gopika however has successfully climbed the tree and has reached the feet of the Lord. Another bas-relief shows Anjaneya carrying the Sanjeevi mountain in his hand.

As in other temples, there are several nude figures and mithuna sculptures in this mantapam (showing the act of love).

Dhvajastambham:—The Dhvajastambham and the Balipitham are situated in the Dhvajastambha mantapam in front of the second or inner Gopuram of the temple. It is a long timber pole circularly shaped encased in gilded

1. According to the Puranas.

copper sheets. It stands on a cutstone structure covered with gilded copper sheets.

There are some miniature sculptures on the Dhvajastambham which deserve notice. One is the figure of Krishna dancing on the hood of the Kaliya snake. Two elephants are seated by the Lord's side. Other figures on the base of the Dhvajastambham include the Garuda, Anjaneya, Krishna lifting up Govardhana hill, etc. Garuda is shown in the *anjali hasta* pose. The Vaishnavite symbol and the Chakra are also shown. A dancing figure of Bala Krishna in the *Navanitha Nritya* pose is also seen here.

The Balipitham in front of the Dhvajastambham is made of cutstone and is square in shape. This is also gilded.

Sri T. K. T. Veera Raghavacharya is of the opinion that the Dhvajastambham and the Balipitham were first erected inside the temple and that it is rather strange to find it in the Sampangi Pradakshinam area. According to the Agamas, the Garuda, the Dhvajastambham and the Balipitham are to be located in the first avaranam or compound in the temple. Where there is a second avaranam in the temple, Garuda would be "in the second quarter of this avaranam and the Dhvaja and Balipitham would come in the third quarter of the avaranam. This second avaranam was built about 1190 A.D. Garuda, the Dhvajastambham and Balipitham would therefore have been within the second avaranam until the date of construction of the Tirumamani mantapam about 1417 A.D. As that construction left little space for the Dhvajastambham and Balipitham, they were shifted to the third avaranam. The Vaikhanasa Agama however recognises this arrangement also as a last resort; but they should be in the third quarter and not in the first where we find them now."

It only remains for us to consider why the outermost

circumambulatory path is called the Sampangi Pradakshinam. *Sri Venkatachala Ithihasa Mala* already referred to throws some light on this. It mentions that the Lord of Tirumalai commanded Thondaman Chakravarthi to construct a temple for Him. The Lord's idol was discovered under a tamarind tree on the Vengadam hill; there was also a champaka tree on the premises. The King desired to construct the Lord's shrine without removing or hurting the trees, but did not see his way to do so until the trees voluntarily moved out of his way enabling him to build the shrine. Ramanuja on the basis of this legend recognised that both the trees are fit for worship. It is possible that champaka trees were then planted in the outer avaranam and gave their name to the Pradakshinam. At present however no trees exist in the temple premises. The legend referred to above is also mentioned in the *Varaha Purana.*

The inner Gopuram:—At the entrance of the inner Gopuram we find two interesting bas-reliefs on the temple walls. One of these shows the Lord's devotee Hathiram[1] playing dice with the Lord of Tirumalai. Srinivasa is shown as comfortably seated on an asanam. He has four arms. The upper right and left arms hold the chakra and sankha as usual. His lower left hand rests gracefully on his left knee. The lower right hand directed towards the left holds the two dice in the palm. The Lord is shown as seated in the *sukhasana* pose with his right leg folded on the seat while the left leg is shown as hanging down gracefully. Opposite to this is another interesting bas-relief depicting Sri Rama holding court. Shri Rama is shown as seated on a platform in the *sukhasana* pose. His right hand is in the *Gnanamudra* pose. His consort Sita is shown as seated next to him in

1. A great devotee of Lord Venkateswara. A 'mutt' in his name exists at Tirumalai to this day.

the *sukhasana* pose. Her right hand is in the *kataka hasta* pose holding a lotus bud, while her left hand hangs down gracefully. Two other figures, obviously Lakshmana and Bharatha, are shown in *anjali hasta* pose. A figure to the right of Sri Rama holds the chatra or the royal umbrella. Two parichárika figures are shown as fanning the Lord. The figure of Anjaneya is also shown in the picture as praying for the blessing of his Master.

The Inner Gopuram:—The base of the inner Gopuram measures 24′ × 36′ × 9′. There is a compound wall starting from this Gopuram and the measurements of this inner prakaram are 160′ × 235′ as indicated in the sketch. The walls of the prakaram bear several inscriptions. There is no inscription directly giving us material to fix the date of the construction of this Gopuram. Sri T. K. T. Veera Raghavacharya, on the basis of the earliest inscription found on the Gopuram, is of the view that the Gopuram was constructed between the period 1160 and 1170 A.D. Entering the inner Gopuram we step into the circumambulatory path called the Vimana Pradakshinam.

STRUCTURES IN THE VIMANA PRADAKSHINAM

Sri Varadarajaswamy temple:—The Varadarajaswamy shrine is located in the Vimana Pradakshinam to our left as we enter the temple premises from the inner Gopuram doorway. It is a very small shrine measuring about 20′ × 15′ and houses the image of Sri Varadarajaswamy. There is a Tamil inscription[1] on the northern wall of the shrine which runs as follows:—"The sum of 100 *Panam* was paid into the *Sri-Bhandaram* on the 23rd day of the Tai month towards (the expenses of) the *Masitirunal* (which is to be conducted) in the year Prabhava (and which was) instituted

1. *T. T. D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, Early Inscriptions (1931), pp. 172-173.

in the name of Harihararaya, by Mullai-Tiruvenkata-Jiyar who executes this charity from the income of the village of Pungodu. As the debit against the interest (*Poliyuttu*) on this sum of 100 *Panam*, the *Amudupadi Sattuppadi* and other articles shall be issued (for this festival) from the *Sri-Bhandaram* in the manner of the festivals instituted previously."

This is the signature of the *Tirunira-ur-Udaiyan*, the temple accountant.

The date referred to in the inscription has been worked out as the 18th January, in the year 1388 A.D. It can therefore, be safely presumed that the shrine was in existence before this date. While discussing the shrine for the Sri Ranganatha utsava vigraha it was already mentioned that the utsava vigraha of Sriranganatha came to Tirumalai temple for safe custody in the early years of the 14th century when the Muslims were over-running South India. Kanchipuram, an important city with the famous shrine for Sri Varadarajaswamy, was also on the route of the Muslim invaders. It is also well-known that during the days of the Khilji imperialism, Mallik Kafur, the General of Alla Uddin Khilji invaded South India and proceeded as far as Rameswaram. Later the armies of Mohammed Bin Tuglak invaded South India (during the period 1327) and sacked Srirangam and Madura when Mabar became one of the provinces of the Tuglak empire and one Jalaluddin Ashan Sha became the Governor of Mabar or Madura. In view of the unsettled conditions it is possible that the deities at Kanchipuram were also brought to Tirumalai for safe custody. If this view is correct, we can assume that the Varadarajaswamy shrine was built at Tirumalai during the period indicated above, for housing the idols of Varadarajaswamy of Kanchipuram. This view is supported by tradition.

The idol of Varadarajaswamy in the temple is in the standing pose. It stands on a pedestal about 10″ high which itself rests on a platform about 4″ high. The figure has four arms; the upper right and left arms hold the chakra and sankha while the lower right hand is in the *abhaya hasta* pose. The left hand appears to be in the *katyavalambita* pose.

Potu Rooms:—Next to the Varadarajaswamy temple, is the main kitchen of the temple called the Potu rooms (61′ × 30′). The Lord's prasadams are cooked here every day. The cooking is done in new earthen pots. It is interesting to note that the kitchen is in charge of Sri Vakuladevi, the foster-mother of Srinivasa. There is an idol of Sri Vakuladevi at the entrance to the kitchen. The idol is inside the kitchen. This figure is in the *padmasana* pose and has four arms. The upper two arms are in the *kataka hasta* mudras and hold lotuses. The lower right hand is in the *abhaya hasta* pose while the left is in the *varada hasta* pose. This deity is also called Madapuli Nachiyar.

Bangaru Bhavi:—In front of the Potu room and adjoining a corridor running east-west in front of the Potu room, is a well covered with gilded plates called the Bangaru Bhavi. The water for abhishekam of the Lord and for cooking the Lord's prasadams is taken from this well. Bangaru Bhavi is a Telugu word which stands for a Well of Gold.

The legend connected with the Bangaru Bhavi is given in the Fifth Stabaka of the Sri *Venkatachala Ithihasa Mala* already referred to. Water for abhishekam of the Lord in the olden days was being obtained from the Papanashanam thirtham in the Tirumalai hills. Once Sri Alavandar present at Tirumalai noticed that Tirumalai Nambi who was at this time performing the duty of carrying water for the temple was not in a position to do so due to sickness. Sri Alavandar

therefore prayed to the Lord that He should accept the water from the well in the temple constructed by one Rangadasa. Sri Ramanuja who heard the above legend during his visit to Tirumalai also ordained that the waters of Papanashanam Thirtham, Akasha Ganga Thirtham and the well called Sundaraswamy well (or Bangaru Bhavi) are holy and can be used for all purposes in the temple. The water from the Bangaru Bhavi has been used in the temple ever since.

Kalyana Mantapam:—The Kalyana mantapam is a large mantapam in the southern portion of the Vimana Pradakshinam and measures about 80′ × 36′. The mantapam consists of 29 pillars one of which forms part of the corridor wall found to the east of it. The Kalyana Mantapam has a beautiful sub-mantapam at its western corner raised on four slender pillars of polished cutstone. The mantapam has also a small shrine. From a study of the sculptures in the mantapam, we can say that the mantapam was constructed in the 16th century. As the name itself indicates the mantapam is being used to perform the Kalyanam or the marriage ceremony of the Lord of Tirumalai. This mantapam has very lovely bas-reliefs and deserves detailed examination. The mantapam shows unmistakable traits of excellence of the Vijayanagar school of architecture. In the main mantapam there is a unique bas-relief of Pavana Narasimha or Holy Narasimha on one of the mantapam pillars. The bas-relief shows Lord Narasimha destroying the demon Hiranya Kasipu. The murthi is shown in the *sukhasana* pose with the right leg folded while the left leg is dangling freely. The Lord has sixteen arms, fourteen of which hold various weapons of the Vishnu such as Chakra, Sankha, Khadga, Khetaka, Parasu, etc. Two arms are exclusively used in destroying the demon (by extraction of his vital organs such as the intestines, etc.). The mantapam

has several other exquisitely carved figures on its granite pillars. One such is the figure of Trivikrama. Here the Lord is shown with four arms; the upper right hand stretched into the ether (with the pointing finger held aloft) indicates that he has occupied the skies. The upper left arm holds the sankha. The lower right arm holds the chakra. The lower left hand is in the *katyavalambita* pose. The left leg of the Lord is firm and erect. The right leg is in a lifted position. One of the Lord's feet is on the head of Bali Chakravarthi. There is another beautiful bas-relief in which the figure of Lord Vishnu is shown with six arms, riding on Garuda. There is another exquisitely carved figure of a hunter and his consort making love to each other. The lady's left hand holds a bow while she embraces her lover with her right hand. The lover's left hand is around the waist of the lady and rests on her hip. He holds two arrows in his right hand. Another figure is that of Vishnu in a dancing pose. He is resting his weight on his right leg while the left is shown in the air bent at the knee. His right hand is in the *abhaya hasta* pose while the left hand is flung into the air in a graceful dancing pose. There is another precious figure showing Sudarshana Chakra or Chakrattalwar with sixteen hands holding various weapons. Other noteworthy figures in the mantapam are Krishna in the Navanitha Nrithya Bhangima, Kaliya Phani-mardana Krishna, a woman in a dancing pose, two monkeys fighting with each other, Garuda etc. The sub-mantapam has four pillars; each pillar is itself a complex pillar with a main pillar square in shape to which are attached three smaller pillars. These are musical pillars producing musical notes when sounded. This mantapam has several other exquisitely carved figures of Vishnu and his consorts, Lord Srinivasa, Sri Rama, Krishna with his two consorts Rukmini and Satya Bhama,

Vishnu in the sitting pose with Lakshmi seated on his lap, etc.

The main pillars are themselves carved perfectly showing warriors riding on lions; the lions themselves are set on figures of elephants, etc. These pillars are also pillars of the complex type having smaller pillars attached to them.

The Corridor:—The Corridor near the Pula Bhavi has some good bas-reliefs which are described below in brief. A unique bas-relief is that of Lakshmi Narasimha. The Lord is shown as a merry celestial. His left hand rests above his hip while he is shown as embracing Lakshmi with his right hand. The fingers of his right hand rest in the area between the breasts of his consort. Another worth-seeing bas-relief is that of a Veera Nari or a brave woman holding a bow.

An excellent and unique bas-relief is Vishnu in a graceful dancing pose similar to that of dancing Nataraj. The figure has four arms. The right and left upper arms hold the chakra and sankha. The lower arms are held in Natya Bhangimas. The figure is resting on one leg while the other is shown in a graceful dancing pose. The other figures on the pillars in the corridor show Gopala Krishna, Krishna in the *Navanita Nritya* pose, Sri Rama with a bow and one arrow, Maha Lakshmi with four arms, Srinivasa and Garuda in the *anjali hasta* pose. The mantapam is used for performing the kalyanotsavams and for seating the processional deity and his consorts during the Brahmotsavam festival. The idols are then kept in the small shrine in the mantapam. The idols also remain in this shrine in the month of December during the adhyayanotsavam festival. It is also relevant to point out that one Tallapakkam Tiruvenkadayyar, son of Siru-Tirumalai Iyyangar of Bharadwaja Gotra endowed the temple for the performance of the marriage festival

of the Lord in Tirumalai. From the inscription,[1] it would appear that the marriage festival was performed for a period of five days. It would also appear that the Lord's processional image was seated in a swing on the last four days of the Kalyana Utsavam. It is also interesting to note that arrangements were made at this Kalyana Utsavam for distribution of chandanam, camphor, etc. to the devotees and to the sumangalis or married women (excluding widows) in particular.

Vahanam Stores:—Adjoining the Kalyana mantapam, we find a mantapam on the western side of the Sampangi Pradakshinam, housing the vahanams of the Lord of Tirumalai. The vahanams are vehicles on which the Lord of Tirumalai rides on special occasions. The Lord of Tirumalai had in earlier days two big foursided wooden cars; these cars are utilised on the eighth day of the Brahmotsavam festival.

The northern side of the Vimana Pradakshinam:—Some of the open mantapams on the northern and western side are used for seating pandits in Vedas etc., who recite the holy books such as the Vedas, the Ramayana, Bhagavadgita, etc., during the day time. There are several rooms on the northern side of the Vimana Pradakshinam. In the corner we find the 'Deepala room' or the room of lights. Next to it, is the Gammikars' room or the room of cooks and the Kaikolas' room or the room of lighting servants. Most of these rooms are kept closed now. The Vimana Venkateswara i.e. Lord Srinivasa on the Vimanam of the temple is visible near the Kaikola room. Pilgrims stand on a small cutstone step here and see the figure of Lord Srinivasa on the Vimanam of the Garbha Griham.

Next to the Kaikola room, is the Pallakki room, where

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Report* (1930) p. 30.

the Lord's palanquin is stored. There is another small room here in which copper plate engravings of songs composed by Tallapakam Annamacharyulu and his descendants are preserved. There is a small room called Sabhaiarai where the Lord's wardrobe and the cot on which he is put to bed at night are stored.

Sri Ramanuja's shrine:—The date of construction of this shrine for Sri Ramanuja is not mentioned directly in any inscription. There is however an inscription[1], on the southern wall of the second prakaram in Tirumalai temple which mentions offering of food to Lord Raghunathan at Tirumalai and to Sri Ramanuja. The inscription in favour of one Satakopadasar Narasimhadasar informs us that he made arrangements for the offering of one Tirupponakam to be offered daily to Raghunathan of Tirumalai, and "12 *Tiruvolakkam* (to be conducted) on the 12 days on which *Udaiyavar-Emperumanar* hears the *Adhyayanam* (recitation) of the *Tiruvaymoli* in the month of Chittirai, 11 *Tiruvolakkam* on (his) 11 monthly (birth) star (days), 1 *Tiruvolakkam* to be offered in the shrine of the said Udaiyavar-Emperumanar, on the (day of) Nammalvar's annual birth-star Vaisakha in the month of Vaikasi after his hearing the *Tiruvaymoli*". This inscription also requires that the food offering should be first made to Tiruvenkatamudaiyan i.e. the Lord of Tirumalai and then to the Udaiyavar. The food offerings are to be made on the Tiruvadhyanam and monthly birth stars of Udaiyavar. This inscription has been dated 23rd November, 1476. We may therefore, safely presume that Ramanuja's shrine came into existence in Tirumalai about the year 1476 A.D. Sri T.K.T. Veera Raghavacharya is however of the view that the Ramanuja temple at Tirupati as well as at Tirumalai were perhaps constructed

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. II, Inscription of Saluva Narasimha's time, 200 T.T. pp. 129-139.

simultaneously, that the Ramanuja temple at Tirupati was in existence in 1220 A.D. and that the Ramanuja shrine at Tirumalai was also constructed at about the same period. He is of the view that an idol at least might have been installed in the temple on the earlier date, and that the present shrine was constructed some time before 1476 A.D. There is some substance in this hypothesis that the image of Ramanuja was available for installation in the temple on the earlier date. This view is strengthened on a perusal of *Sri Venkatachala Ithihasa Mala* which mentions about the setting up of an image of Ramanuja in Venkatachalam. The legend mentions that one Anantarya after hearing about the death of Ramanuja prayed to Lord Srinivasa that He might permit the setting up of Ramanuja's image at Venkatachalam and that the Lord's sanction was obtained. As indicated earlier, the work belongs to the 12th century. If we credit the legend in the *Sri Venkatachala Ithihasa Mala* we should agree that an image of the preceptor was ready for installation in the temple in the 12th century itself—earlier than the period and dates suggested by Sri Veera Raghavacharya. The shrine itself might have been constructed later on.

Ramanuja is said to have been born in the year 1017 A.D. According to traditional and historical sources, he lived to the ripe old age of 120 years. This would indicate that his niryanam took place about the year 1137 A.D. Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar is however of the view that the traditional date for Ramanuja has been fixed a little too early and a re-adjustment of the date is necessary. There is however no doubt that Sri Ramanuja's fruitful years were in the 11th century and the early years of the 12th century. Ramanuja is the greatest exponent and founder of the

Visishtadvaita system of philosophy.[1] He is worshipped by all Srivaishnavas. However puja as such is not done to him in the temple. As mentioned earlier, prasadam which is given as 'Naivedyam' to Sri Venkateswara is offered to this Acharya also. It is also worth remembering that the Alwars do not find a place in the Tirumalai temple. Only Sri Ramanuja who is not an Alwar has been given a shrine in Tirumalai. This Acharya is specially honoured in the temple as he argued the Vaishnavas' cause before the Yadavaraja and proclaimed to the world that the Vengadam Shrine is a Vishnu shrine. He also laid down detailed instructions regarding the worship of the Lord in the temple. These aspects are discussed separately in Chapter IX.

It only remains to be pointed out that Sri Ramanuja is a follower of the pancharatra form of worship of Lord Vishnu. This is the form of worship which is followed in many Vaishnavite shrines in India, the other form being the Vaikhanasa system followed in the temple at Tirumalai.

Sri Yoganarasimhaswamy temple:—Next to the shrine of Ramanuja is located the shrine of Yoga Narasimhaswamy. An important inscription connected with this shrine is on the west wall of the second prakaram in Tirumalai temple. It is reproduced below :[2]

"May there be prosperity! On the day of Pusam (Pushya) combined with Saturday, being the 2nd lunar day of the bright fortnight of the Mithuna month in the year Pramadicha, current with the Saka year 1415, the *Sthanattar* of Tirumala registered the following *Silasasanam* in

1. For a brief and masterly exposition of Ramanuja's life and teachings, readers may peruse the book 'Ramanuja's teachings in his own words' by M. Yamunacharya, published in the Bhavan's Book University Series.
2. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. II, Inscriptions of Saluva Narasimha's time, pp. 209-212.

favour of Tammayan, son of Dattiraja, one of the Brahmanas of Kunakkuntai.

In as much as you have paid this day into the *Sri-Bhandaram,* 300 Narpanam for the purpose of propitiating Alagiya-Singar (Narasimhaswami), (enshrined) within the temple of Tiruvenkatamudaiyan, with 30 *Tirupponakam* on the thirty days of the *Tiruppalli-Eluchchi* and with 10 *atirasa-padi* on the ten days, viz., *Sri Jayanti, Vasanta-Paurnami, Sri Rama Navami* and the seventh day in each of the seven *Tirukkodi-Tirunal,* in your name, in this manner, as a *Poliyuttu* from the *Sri Bhandaram.*

This sum of 300 *Panam* shall be utilised for the excavation of the tank-fed channels in the *Tiruvidaiyattam* villages and, with the income realised thereby, shall be supplied from the *Sri-Bhandaram* (articles) on the following scale:—

"For the 30 *Tirupponakam* at the rate of one *Tirupponakam* per day during the *Tiruppalli Eluchchi* for Alagiya Singar.

1 *Vatti* and 10 *Marakkal* of rice with the *Malaikuniya-ninran-kul,*

3 *Nali* and 3 *Ulakku* of ghee,

3 *Marakkal* and 3 *Nali* of green gram,

1 *Nali* of pepper,

vegetables, salt and curds;

and for the 10 *Atirasa-Padi* on the ten days comprising the three days of *Sri Jayanti, Vasanta-paurnami* and *Sri Rama Navami* and the seven days, viz., the seventh festival days of the (seven) Tirukkodi-Tirunal,

10 *Marakkal* of rice,

22 *Nali* and 1 *Ulakku* of ghee,

1 *Nali* of pepper,

1000 *Palam* of jaggery; and

500 areca-nuts,

1000 betel-leaves and

20 *Palam* of sandal for distribution.

The balance of 1 *Uri* of *Prasadam* remaining after issuing 1 *Uri* of *Prasadam* for the twelve *Nirvaham* of the *Sthanattar* from the donor's share of a quarter of the offered *prasadam,* being 1 *Nali* of the *Tiruppalli-Eluchchi-Prasadam* per day,

together with the balance of the *Atirasam* remaining after issuing one *Atirasam* for the *Nirvaham* in the *Padi* (offered) on the seventh festival day,

and the balance of the four *Atirasam* remaining after issuing nine *Atirasam* for the twelve *Nirvaham* out of (the donor's share of) the thirteen *Atirasam* for each *Padi* (offered) on the days of the *Sri Jayanti, Vasanta Paurnami* and *Sri Rama Navami,*

at this rate, the respective balances of the offerings made to Alagiya-Singar, your *Acharya* Van Sathakopa-Jiyar and the successive line of his disciples shall receive on behalf of the workmen engaged in the cultivation of your *Nandavanam.*

The balance of the *Prasadam* and *Atirasam* remaining after deducting the donor's share we shall be empowered to distribute during the forenoon *Adaippu.*

In this manner shall (your charity) be extant throughout the succession of your descendants till the lasting of the moon and the sun.

Thus has the temple-accountant *Tiruninra-Ur-Udaiyan* composed (this deed) with the consent of the Srivaishnavas. The protection of the Srivaishnavas (is sought) for these".

From the above inscription, we learn that Sri Narasimhaswamy, otherwise called Alagiya Singar, had been en-

shrined in the temple before the date of the inscription which has been worked out as the 15th June, 1493 A.D. It is also clear that this God obtained Tirupponakam for 30 days and Athirasapadi for 3 days on *Sri Jayanthi, Vasantha Paurnami* and *Sri Rama Navami* days. Athirasapadi was also offered during the seven days of Brahmotsavam. It is interesting also to note that this inscription mentions of Van-Sathakopa-Jiyar the founder of the Ahobala Mutt of Sri Vaishnavas. Another inscription found on the south wall of the first prakaram in Tirumalai temple reads as follows:[1]

"We shall also supply each day, along with the one *Tiruvolakkam* of Alagiya-Singar, for the 3 *Matha Sesham* to be offered to Periya-Perumal

3 *Marakkal* of rice, and

1 *Ulakku* and 1 *Alakku* of ghee,

2 *Nali* of rice for the *Matrai,*

vegetables as a relish for the *Dadhyodana-Sanshi* and

1 *Alakku* of pepper or seasoning (for the same offering).

Thus is (this) written up by the temple-accountant Tiruninra-Ur-Udaiyan with the permission of the Srivaishnavas".

From this inscription, it is also obvious that the offerings to Alagiya Singar were actually made to the Lord of Tirumalai or Periyaperumal in the name of Alagiya Singar. This has been the practice in the temple.

The innermost temple:—We now come to the innermost temple comprising of the Tirumamani mantapam, the Tiruvilankoyil or the snapana mantapam which leads into the Garbha Griham through the Ramar Medai and the Sayana mantapam or Antharala mantapam.

1. *T. T. D. Epigraphical series*, Vol. II, Inscriptions of Saluva Narasimha's time, p. 70.

The Tirumamani mantapam:—As we enter the inner Gopuram and step into the Vimana Pradakshinam, we notice the Garuda shrine which is a part of the Tirumamani mantapam. On the outer walls of the Garuda shrine is a figure of Lord Vishnu in the Sayana pose. The Garuda shrine is a crudely built structure which is located in the eastern portion of the Tirumamani mantapam, opposite the Bangaru Vakili or the Gate of Gold which forms the western end of the Tirumamani mantapam leading into the Tiruvilankoyil or snapana mantapam. The Tirumamani mantapam was originally an open mantapam. It has however been closed now by putting up railings all around it. This mantapam houses in addition to the Garuda shrine the Hundi where pilgrims drop their devotional offerings and 'mudupus' to the Lord of Tirumalai. This Hundi is located on the north-western area of the mantapam. Two huge bells of the temple are located in the south-western portion of the mantapam.

An inscription to be found on the northern wall (outer side) of the record room in the first prakaram of Tirumalai temple mentions about the construction of the Tirumamani mantapam by one Mallanna residing at Chandragiri. The inscription runs as follows:—[1]

"Hail: On Wednesday, the day of Sravanam (star), being the 12th lunar day of the bright fortnight of the Simha month in the Hemulambi (Hevilambi) year, corresponding to the auspicious Saka year 1339, Mallanna alias Sri Madhavadasar residing in Chandragiri (dedicated to Sri Venkatesa) the *Tirumamani-mantapam* (front portico), comprising the TIRUMUTTINADANDAL (beautiful flooring), KALDARAM (stone-foundation), the decorative work extending from the KURADU (basement) up to the STHUPI (roof) and the MEYAKKAL

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, Early Inscriptions, (1931) pp. 186-187.

(sloping terrace) over this, as being his construction (TIRUPPANI)".

The date of the inscription has been worked out as the 25th August, 1417 A.D.

This mantapam has 16 pillars. The pillars on the outer edge of the mantapam are of the complex type with the pillars resting on lions. All the pillars have very lovely bas-reliefs carved on them. A unique bas-relief on one of the pillars is the figure of Vishnu with four arms seated on an elephant. This is perhaps the only Vishnu murthi shown as seated on a Gajavahanam. The murthi has four arms; the upper two hold the chakra and the sankha. The lower right hand is in the *abhaya hasta* pose while the left hand rests on his thigh. The figure is seated in the *sukhasana* pose on the elephant. The left leg is folded at the knee while the right leg is dangling down rather gracefully. Another lovely bas-relief is that of Sitadevi seated on a platform giving her ring to Hanuman to be delivered to Sri Rama. Another impressive bas-relief is that of Prasanna Varaha Murthi, i.e. Vishnu in Varaha Avatar with his consort Lakshmi. This figure has four arms; the upper two hold the chakra and sankha while the lower right hand is in the *abhaya hasta* pose. The lower left hand is on the thigh of Lakshmi. A particularly impressive bas-relief about 27" high is that of Ugra Narasimhamurthi emerging out of a pillar. This murthi has four arms; the upper right and left arms hold the chakra and sankha while He uses his lower right and left hands to emerge out of the pillar. Another peculiar bas-relief shows a couple; the man is in a bent position while his consort is playfully pulling him from behind. There is another impressive bas-relief of Sri Rama sitting on a throne. One of his hands is in the *abhaya hasta* pose. Lakshmana is standing by his side holding an arrow in his right hand and his bow in his

left hand. Anjaneya is standing on the other side. His left hand is on his left knee and his right hand near his mouth. He appears to be giving some confidential news to his Lord. His tail is directed towards the sky. Other figures in the mantapam include the Kali Purusha on a flying horse, a warrior with a long sword and shield, Tara requesting Vali not to go to war with Rama, Dhanurdhari Sri Rama, Gopala Krishna, Srinivasa, etc.

The Suprabhatam (the hymns waking up the Lord) is sung for the Lord in the Tirumamani mantapam. The Koluvu Srinivasa also holds his *durbar* in this mantapam. The mantapam is used for housing the processional deity on several special occasions.

The Garuda Shrine:—Garuda is the vahanam or vehicle of Lord Vishnu. The shrine for Garuda was constructed in the temple rather crudely after the construction of the Tirumamani mantapam in the year 1417 A.D. The earliest mention of Garuda in the Tirumalai Devasthanam inscriptions[1] is in the year 1446 A.D. In the inscription bearing No. 17 G.T. it is seen the offerings given are only for the Garuda figure painted on the flag to be raised during the seven festivals "being the Tirukkodi Tirunal celebrated at Tirumala for Malaikiniyaninraperumal counted from the Adi festival to the Chittirai festival." The earliest inscription mentioning about the Garudalwar residing in his own shrine is in the year 1512 A.D. An inscription on the west wall of the second prakaram of the Tirumalai temple mentions of one Sriman Mahanayakacharya (Chief Commander) Periya Obula Nayakkar Rama Nayakkar propitiating the Garudalwar abiding in the shrine of Tiruvenkatamudayan with offerings of Tirupponakam such as chandanam, arecanuts and betel-

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, Early Inscriptions, (1931) pp. 219-221.

nuts, ghee for lighting lamps, and one atirasapadi. This inscription has been dated 14th July, 1512 A.D. We can therefore, safely infer that the Garuda shrine came into being about the period mentioned above. Inscriptions up to the end of the 15th century only mention about the propitiation of the Garuda image on the Garuda flag to be flown during the Brahmotsavam period and not of Garuda in the Archa form. It is therefore probable that the Garuda image as well as the Garuda shrine came into existence during the period between 1500-1512 A.D.

The Garuda image in the Garuda shrine is about 5' high with hands in the *anjali hasta* pose. The wings are spread apart as if he is ready to fly away. Huge rings adorn his ears. He has several ornaments on his body. There is a small vimanam on his shrine.

Bangaru Vakili:—At the western end of the Tirumamani mantapam is the Bangaru Vakili or the Door of Gold. We find two images of Jaya and Vijaya on both sides of this door. These are **dwarapalakas** or sentinels of the temple. The images are made of copper. They are very beautiful. The images have four arms; the upper hands hold the chakra and sankha while one of the lower hands bears the Gada or mace. The other hand is in the *suchi hasta* pose, the pose in which we are warned to be clean in body and mind while entering the sanctum sanctorum.

The Bangaru Vakili is unique in that it exhibits the various forms of Vishnu. According to Vaishnavite thought and teachings, Lord Vishnu manifests himself in various forms. These forms are the param, vyuham, vibhavam, antaryamin and archa forms. A brief description of these forms is given below.[1] Para form is the type of the Sup-

1. *A hand book of South Indian Images* by T.N. Srinivasan (1954) pp. 121-122.

reme Deity as existing in the higher world beyond the experience of human beings. This is referred to as Nitya Vibhuti and God is conceived to manifest Himself as described in the Vaikunta gadya of Sri Ramanuja—where he is known as Paravasudeva or Paramatman.

Vyuham is the manifestation of the Paramatman in the apartment of his various functions of creation, sustenance and dissolution. They are in particular named as Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradhyumna and Aniruddha respectively. These forms of Vishnu are also inaccessible to the ordinary man.

Vibhava type of Bhagawan is the accessible form to most blessed of the Lord's creations. They are the manifestations of the Lord, through the several avataras and amsas like the Dasavataras of Vishnu.

Antaryamin is the type of God as He exists in atomic form in the hearts of men. Though invisible He manifests Himself to the devotee by proper concentration and control of senses. By fervent prayers, His existence within one's own self can be easily realised and obeisance is made to Him by nivedana of food before taking it by Parishechanam.

The more popular form of Supreme God is the Archa aspect, when His manifestation is easily tangible and is well felt by man. Sri Pillai Lokacharya says in his *Arthapanchaka*: "The Archa form consists in the images of Bhagawan which accommodate themselves to the various tastes of his creatures, having no fixed form but that which the worshipper may choose and describe to call him by; all knowing but seeming as if not knowing; all powerful but seeming as if powerless; all sufficient but seeming as if needy, thus seeming to exchange places, the worshipped with the worshipper and choosing to be ocularly manifest to him in temples and homes, in short in all places and at all times desired."

It is also significant that the Suprabhatam or daily

ceremony in which hymns are chanted to wake up the Lord, are sung before the Bangaru Vakili, which has a panel of all the forms of Vishnu, and not before the Archa form obtaining in the Garbha Griham.

The Snapana Mantapam or Tiruvilankoyil:—Crossing the Bangaru Vakili, we enter a semi-lighted room which is the Snapana Mantapam or the Tiruvilankoyil. As already mentioned in Chapter II, Bhoga Srinivasa murthi was consecrated in this mantapam in the year 966 A.D. We may therefore, presume that this mantapam existed in the early years of the 10th century A.D. itself. Sri T. K. T. Veera Raghavacharya is of the view that the pillars in the room are not original pillars and that the mantapam must have been renovated and alterations made. He is of the view that the original pillars were circular in origin while the pillars now in the mantapam are square in shape. These pillars themselves bear a few good bas-reliefs. The bas-reliefs include the Garuda, bearded figures playing on drums, Bala Krishna in the Kaliya Mardana attitude, Yoga Narasimhaswamy in the yoga pose, a graceful woman dressed only up to the waist chastising her son under a tree, monkeys playfully fighting with each other, Kali Purusha riding a horse, etc. A particularly impressive bas-relief is that of Maha Vishnu in the sitting pose. He has four arms. The upper arms hold the chakra and the sankha. The serpent Sesha is also portrayed. The Lord's consorts are seated in the *sukhasana* pose on his right and left.

Ramar Medai:—Crossing the Tiruvilankoyil we enter the Ramar Medai. In the olden days the Ramar Medai and the incomplete first circumambulatory path now existing around the main shrine formed the Mukkoti Pradakshinam of the temple. This circumambulatory path however was closed and the Ramar Medai has been made into a closed

room. Sri T.K.T. Veera Raghavacharya is of the view that the Ramar Medai was formed sometime during the period between 1262 and 1265 A.D. As a result of this, the Mukkoti Pradakshinam or the circumambulatory path around the Garbha Griham is open only on three sides. The Ramar Medai has two small platforms on which figures of Angada, Hanuman, etc. are exhibited. It has also a figure of a paricharika holding a light. This figure which is of bronze is about 2 feet high.

Mukkoti Pradakshinam:—Around the original central shrine comprising of the Garbha Griham with its Mukha Mantapam called Sayana Mantapam, is the first circumambulatory path called the Mukkoti Pradakshinam. This Pradakshinam is opened in the temple only one day in a year i.e. the Vaikunta Ekadasi day. The Pradakshinam is open only on the northern, southern and western portions. The northern portion of the Pradakshinam is wider than the western and southern sides. There is a small temple for Vishvaksena also called the Senai Mudaliar on the northern side of the Mukkoti Pradakshinam. This murthi has four arms; the upper two hold chakra and sankha. The lower right hand is in the *abhaya hasta* pose while the lower left hand is resting on his left leg just below the knee. He is shown seated in the *sukhasana* pose with the right leg dangling freely. Vishvaksena is recognised as the controller of the temple finances. This image is mentioned in one of the inscriptions[1] on the south wall of the second prakaram in Tirumalai temple. This inscription states that the Senai Mudaliar at the shrine of Udaiyavar is to receive one appappadi at the time of reciting the iyal on a certain day and seven appappadi a piece on the seven days during the adhyayanotsavam in

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series*, Vol. II, Inscription of Saluva Narasimha's time, pp. 192-198.

Tirumalai. The inscription is dated 27th June, 1491 A.D. The northern side of the Mukkoti Pradakshinam has also a small cement tank, into which flow the abhishekam waters of the Lord of Tirumalai from the Garbha Griham. The abhishekham waters are removed from the cement tank by hand using pots after the abhishekam is over. The walls of the Mukkoti Pradakshinam on the northern side are sculptured and bear stone columns of circular shape. There is an empty alcove on the northern side without any murthi installed in it. The stone alcoves in the Mukkoti Pradakshinam were perhaps built for the installation of the several murthis according to Vaikhanasa Agama; their installation was perhaps prevented by the followers of Sri Ramanuja who had a greater regard for the pancharatra form of worship of Lord Vishnu. The walls adjoining the Garbha Griham also show some Purnakumbha sculptures. Some of the circular stone columns are shown as emerging out of Purnakumbhas (vessels or pots that are full to the brim).

The southern side of the Mukkoti Pradakshinam is similar to that of the northern portion though very narrow in width. On the western side of the Mukkoti Pradakshinam are several circular pillars. The height of these pillars will be not less than 15′ high.

The Sayana Mantapam:—The Ramar Medai leads into the Sayana mantapam which is a room 18′ 6″ square. This mantapam is devoid of any noteworthy sculptures or structures. The Lord of Tirumalai is put to sleep in this mantapam during the Ekanta Seva at night as already mentioned.

The Sanctum or the Garba Griham:—Behind the Sayana mantapam is the Garbha Griham or the Sanctum Sanctorum. The stone step between the Garbha Griham and the Sayana mantapam is called the Kulasekharappadi in honour of

Kulasekhara Alwar. Devotees are not allowed to step on this or enter the Garbha Griham of the Lord of Tirumalai.

The Garbha Griham is almost a square-shaped structure (12″ square). The walls of Garbha Griham as well as the walls of Sayana mantapam, otherwise called the Mukha mantapam, are really double structures with two separate sets of walls enclosing some air space between them. This was perhaps necessitated by the construction of the additional structures comprising of the Mukkoti Pradakshinam built later. It is interesting to note that the Garbha Griham was called in the olden days as Koyil Alwar. The walls of the Garbha Griham as they exist at present are made up of cut-stone, and can be dated to belong to the 8th or 9th century A.D. at the earliest. The temple type consisting of a Garbha Griham with a Mukha mantapam with a Pradakshinapatha got established in South India about the 8th century A.D. In view of this we cannot say with any degree of certainty that the present temple structure belongs to a period ealier than the 8th century A.D. This hypothesis does not in any way conflict with the tradition as well as the legend that the Lord's idol has been in existence at Tirumalai for ages. Earlier temples must have existed around the idol in the earlier days giving place in the 8th or 9th century A.D. to the cutstone structure existing at present.

It is interesting to note that renovations of temples take place in all temples and Tirumalai temple is no exception in this regard. Thus for instance the following inscription[1] bearing No. 17 T.T. found on the northern wall of the first prakaram of the Tirumalai temple shows that renovation of the shrine was done during the 40th year of the reign of Sri Veera Narasimha Yadavaraya. "Hail, Prosperity! On the 20th day in the month of Arpasi in the 40th year of the reign

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, Early Inscriptions, p. 120.

of Nayanar Vira-Narasingadeva Yadavarayar, on the receipt of the order of Nayanar by the Sthanattar (to the effect) that, at the time of the commencement by Tiruppullanidasar, one of the Desantaris, of the renovation of the shrine of Koyilalvar, the old inscriptions engraved on the central shrine built in the past shall be re-engraved at the north corner on the outer side of the first Prakaram, and the Sthanattar having, in pursuance of the order, directed their re-engraving, this is the document so re-engraved on Friday combined with Uttiradam, being the 22nd day of the Chittirai month in the same year of reign, to wit." The inscription shows the date of the king's order permitting repairs as well as the date of completion of repairs. It would therefore not be strange to presume that the existing Garbha Griham was preceded in the olden times by structures which did not last long, or which were renovated or replaced subsequently. Support for such a hypothesis is available in traditional accounts.

It only needs to be mentioned that the Garbha Griham houses only one Mula murthi and the temple in Tirumalai is unique in that it is the only Eka-murthi temple for Vishnu in India.

CHAPTER V

THE VENGADAM HILL, AND THE TEMPLE THEREON

The Vengadam Hill according to the Puranas is the sporting hill of Lord Vishnu and was brought to earth from Vaikuntam by Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu. The Puranic concept of Venkatachalam or Seshachalam is that it is a peak called Ananda—one of the peaks of Meruparvata—and that it is coiled by Adi Sesha. The connected legend is given in the Brahma Purana and the Bhavishyottara Purana. According to the Bhavishyottara Purana, once while Lord Sriman Narayana was in Vaikuntam, Sesha as Dwarapalaka prevented Vayu, the God of Winds, from entering Vaikuntam. Vayu and Sesha argued the matter, until the Lord intervened in the matter. Sesha then boasted that he was strong and that Vayu was not equal to him in strength. The Lord then said to him "Let there be a contest and I shall judge; Coil thyself on the peak Ananda which is an off-shoot of Meru; cling to the peak with all thy strength. Vayu shall then try to dislodge you from the hill." Vayu then tried to dislodge 'Sesha' concentrating all his power in his breath. Sesha then raised one of his heads for a moment, when Vayu blew off the peak along with Sesha. Meru then prayed to Vayu to spare his son, Ananda. Vayu therefore carefully placed the hill on the banks of the River Swarnamukhi. This is how Venkatachalam got the name Seshachalam; it is sacred to Vishnu.

The Varaha Purana mentions that Vishnu in the Boar form and Srinivasa manifested themselves on the banks of the holy Pushkarini in Divya Vimanams on Venkatachalam, the Kridadri brought from Vaikuntam to earth. The

Puranas also tell us that the Lord took his present archa form at the end of Dwaparayuga in his infinite grace and love towards the weak and sinning people of Kaliyuga on the request of Brahma and others. The celestials including Brahma are said to worship the Lord at Tirumalai as Nityasuris, invisible to mortal eyes. In fact, when the temple doors are closed at night at Tirumalai all the articles for worship, including the gold and silver vessels with spiced water are left open in the sanctum for worship by celestials. The next morning the water in the vessels thus left is distributed as holy water to the devotees of the Lord. The Bhavishya Purana also mentions how the Lord's Svayamvyakta idol was discovered by King Tondaiman in an anthill, under a tamarind tree on the banks of the Swami Pushkarni. This Purana also gives the legend connected with the construction of the first temple of the Lord in Kaliyuga. Once King Tondaiman who came to worship the Lord of Tirumalai was commanded by him as follows:—"I have become a Grihasta or a householder. It is not proper that I should be houseless. Construct a temple for me. The credit for this shall be thine". Tondaiman then took an oath immediately that he would obey the Lord's command. Lord Srinivasa and his consort Padmavati then selected the site for the temple on the southern bank of the Swami Pushkarini on Seshachalam. The Lord wished that his temple should have two gopurams, a Dhvajastambham, three prakarams, seven doors, the Asthana Mantapam, Yaga mantapam, a Gosala or a shed for cattle, houses for storing grain, flowers, oil, ghee and houses for dining, decoration, and ornaments. The temple was to be a structure of stone and was to be ornamented with copper and gold. The King then constructed a temple for the Lord as directed. It was gem-studded, had Chathur-murties (four

images) on it and was a splendid looking Vimanam. And the Lord then gladly accepted the Ananda Nilayam Vimanam as his residence.

Another interesting puranic concept is that the Tirupati hills along with the hills of Ahobilam and the range of hills at Srisailam form the body of Adisesha. It is a geographically accepted fact that all these hills give the appearance of a cobra with its hood raised, basking in the open Sun. The seven hills of Tirupati are supposed to represent the seven hoods of Sesha, and the Lord as Kaliyamardana Krishna is presumed to dance on the Adisesha representing the divine rhythm in the limitless Cosmos.

Venkatachalam is also mentioned in early classical Tamil literature. It is mentioned as 'Vengadam' hill in the ancient Tamil Grammar *Tolkappiyam.* The deity is however not mentioned either in Tolkappiyam or by the Sangam Poet Mamulanar, (2nd Century A.D.) who also describes the 'Vengadam' Hill. The body of literature called Sangam literature which mentions about Venkatachalam comprises of poems current in Tamilnad in the early ages. All this literature has been ascribed to a period earlier than 8th century A.D. Some of the poems coming under this literature throw some light on Venkatachalam and its history. Poems from a work called the *Ahananuru* also refer to Tirupati as Vengadam, and mention of a 'Vaduku' Chief 'Pulli' as the ruler of 'Vengadam'. Pulli has been considered to be a Telugu Chief of Rayalaseema in Andhra Pradesh, ruling the Venkatachalam area in those days. 'Vaduku' appears to be the Tamil name for Telugu. Vengadam was in those days considered the northern border of Tamilnad, and the early works of Sangam literature show that Vengadam was the place where the language of the Tamils changed from Tamil to 'Vaduku'. Another

ruler Tirayyan, with his capital at Pavattiri, recognised to be the existing village of Reddipalayam, in the Gudur taluk of Nellore District in Andhra Pradesh is also mentioned in these works. It would appear that Venkatachalam area was then thickly forested, and elephants were found in plenty in the zone. The Chief 'Pulli' was recognised as one liberal in his gifts and a brave warrior. He was obviously the prince of hunters, hunting being the main occupation of the people in the forests around 'Vengadam'. In Mamulanar's poems Tirupati is also referred to as 'Pullikunram or the hill of the Chieftain Pulli. Mamulanar also mentions that Vengadam was prosperous because of the festivals on the hill. We could perhaps draw the inference that festivals on the hill were connected with the temple of Tirumalai. It may be remembered in this connection that according to the Puranas, Chakravarti Tondaiman after discovering the idol constructed a temple for the Lord and instituted festivals at Tirumalai. One of the early Alwars, Tirumalisai Alwar, also refers to the festival of 'Onavilavu' at Tirumalai; Onavilavu is obviously the same as the annual Brahmotsavam festival of Lord Srinivasa.

The Tamil classic Silappadhikaram which is a work by a Jain (or a Buddhist?) also mentions and describes the Lord of Tirumalai standing on the hill of Tirupati as follows:[1]

"High on Vengadam's towering crest, with flowing
streams in flood,
Betwixt the effulgent glory, of shining Sun and Moon,
Like unto a blue cloud in lightning dress
In all the brilliance of rainbow light,
The Red-eyed great One, majestic stands
In dress of flowery brilliance with garland bright,

1. As quoted from Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar's *History of Tirupati,* Vol. I.

One lotus hand with fearsome disc adorned, and
milk-white conch (the other held)".

The author of this work, one Ilango-adigal, is presumed to belong to the 18th century A.D. The work indicates that there was a Vishnu image with discus and conch on 'Vengadam' hill.

The Alwars also in their songs have made detailed references to Tirumalai and the Lord thereon. Among the twelve Alwars or Vaishnava saints the early Alwars are Poyagi Alwar, Bhutam Alwar, Pey Alwar and Tirumalisai Alwar. According to tradition, the first three Alwars obtained enlightenment of God in the village of Tirrukkovilur.[1] It appears that all the three Alwars were thrown together on a stormy night and that Poygai Alwar made himself comfortable on the narrow pial of a small house in the village. Bhutam Alwar then knocked at the door and requested for admission. Poygai Alwar admitted him in spite of the fact that there was only space for one person to lie down on the pial and both of them had to sit up all the night on the pial. Late in the night, Pey Alwar also knocked on the door and the first two accommodated him though all of them had to remain standing on the pial for lack of space. Lord Vishnu and Lakshmi are then said to have knocked on the door. They were also admitted! Vishnu then slowly squeezed out his three devotees. While they were being thrown out, it dawned on them that Lord Vishnu was with them and testing them. The three Alwars then spontaneously broke into songs of praise of the Lord. The first Poygai made the whole universe the lamp vessel, the ocean the ghee for feeding the lamp, the Sun Himself the burning wick, and, lighting such a lamp, he placed at the lotus feet of the One with the blazing disc, his garland of verses in order that the great

1. *From Nityanusandhanam* (Telugu) Vavilla Ramaswami Sastrulu & Sons, Madras (1953).

ocean of evil besetting him may leave him. The second in his own way made his own loving devotion (anbu) the lamp-vessel, his ardour (arvam) for service the ghee for feeding the lamp, and his mind melting with goodness, the lamp wick. He lighted the lamp of true knowledge (gnana) and dedicated it to God Narayana, as one capable of incorporating his divine knowledge in Tamil verse. The third on the contrary broke out 'Lo, I see the Goddess Sri. I see the golden body, I see the colour of the rising Sun. I see the glorious disc. I see the dextral conch. I see all this in Him of the colour of the ocean, dear to me'.[1]

The compositions of the first Poygai Alwar make several references to Tirumalai and the Lord of Tirumalai. A verse quoted from Dr. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar's *History of Tirupati* reads as follows:—

"He rides the bull and bird
He burnt the castle (the three castles in the air)
And broke open the heart (tore up Hiranya Kasipu's)
Chest with his claws as Narasimha.
He is smeared over with ash (Vibhuti).
He is of the saphire blue colour.
Part of His body is a Lady (Parvati),
And in one part is the Lady born of the lotus,
Sri or Lakshmi. His coiffure, the long
Matted locks. His head (is) covered by a tall crown;
He wears the Ganga (Ganges) on His head (Siva),
And on His lengthening foot (Vishnu Trivikrama)".

Another of his verses has already been quoted in Chapter II.

This Alwar appears to have regarded the Lord of Tirumalai as a combination of the Vishnu and Siva.

The second, Bhutam Alwar, author of the work 'Irandan

1. As quoted from Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar's *History of Tirupati*, Vol. I.

Thiruvandadi', also a devotee of Vishnu, regards the Lord of Tirumalai in one verse as the One who destroyed Ravana. Like Poygai Alwar he also visualised the Supreme Deity as a combination of the two forms Siva and Vishnu or as Hari-Hara.

The third in the list of early Alwars is Pey Alwar, author of 'Mundran Thiruvandadi', who also recognises the twin aspects of Hari and Hara of Lord Vishnu. Two of his verses clearly mention (quoted in Chapter II of the Book) that the Lord of Tirumalai has combined into One—the forms of Siva and Vishnu.

The next Alwar who engages our attention is Tirumalisai Alwar, the author of 'Naalaan Thiruvandadi'. According to tradition he belonged to the village Thirumalisai near Madras. He was probably a 'Chandala' by caste. He was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and the first of the Alwars who shows intolerance of the worship of other deities such as Siva, firm in the view that Lord Narayana is the one and only Deity that matters in the Universe.

The next Alwar who merits our consideration is Nammalvar, the greatest of Alwars of South India. Nammalvar was the son of Sudra parents and was born in the divya kshetra 'Sri Kuru Kuru' on the banks of the river Tamra Parni. He is also considered to be the Guru to the Alwar Madhura Kavi according to tradition. He is the author of the famous works Thiruviruttam, Tiruvasiriyam, Peria Thiruvandadi and Thiruvaymozi. The four works are renderings of the four Vedas, Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Atharvana Veda and Sama Veda. His compositions are the most important in the Prabandham collection of verses of the Alwars called the 'Nalayira Prabandham'.

He is also called Satakopacharya as he is credited with vanquishing 'Sata Vayu'—the Vayu that causes ignorance

in man. He is said to have been born in the year 798 A.D. and lived for about 35 years. He is considered to be an incarnation of Vishnu, born specially to compose the 'Dravida Veda' in Tamil. Actually his Tiruvaymozhi is considered to be equal in merit, if not more sacred and merit-giving, with the Bhagavadgita. In his works, he shines as the greatest exponent of Bhakti, love and self-surrender to God. His love for the Lord is that of the love-lorn maiden pining away for her lover. In his works, he is at times a 'Sakhi' or a girl friend to the Lord, or a maiden pining for the love of the husband or lover. At other times he is the Mother of a maiden pining to join her Lord.

The gist of a few of his verses relating to Lord of Tirumalai from Tiruvaymozhi are given below.[1]

"The Valar Voli Mayan, or the Sarveswara with his divyamanohara mangala murthi and divya gunas has manifested himself with pleasure on Tirumaalirumsolai, surrounded by Divya Udyanavanas. Worship Him while thou art young and before old age overtakes thee".

"The butter is preserved in pots hung high to the roof but Krishna delights in stealing it and consuming it avidly with his friends. Let us then follow the path to Tirumaalirumsolai, which is the 'koli' or temple for this Krishna."

"The Lord who destroyed Puthana has his 'koil' in Tirumaalirumsolai. Let us not have thoughts that lead us to sin, but only think that his Lord should be worshipped and conquer Samsara."

"The one who says 'Vengadattu Uraivarkku Namo Venatam Athu' or the one who says 'I bow to the Niravadhika Prabhava Sampanna Murthi Sriyahpathi who has

1. From *Nityanusandhanam* a Vaishnavite work in Telugu about the Alwars. Vavilla Ramaswami Sastrulu and Sons, Madras, 1953.

manifested Himself on Tirumalai' is released from all sins. All his sins get burnt to ashes."

Nammalvar is also of the view that the Lord of Tirumalai has the Rudra, Brahma and Lakshmi aspects of Vishnu in Himself and that these deities form a part of the Lord and have no independent existence of their own.

The other Alwars are Madhura Kavi, Perialwar, Perialwar's foster daughter Goda Devi, Kulasekhara Alwar, Thondaradippodi Alwar, Tiruppanalvar and Tirumangai Alwar. Madhurakavi Alwar, author of the work 'Kanninun Siruttambu', said to have been born in 797 A.D. was the disciple of Nammalvar. Nammalvar is said to have handed over his famous works for preservation and propagation to Madhurakavi Alwar. Perialvar was born in Srivilliputtur and is the author of the famous 'Pallandu-Pallandu' and 'Perialvar Tirumozhi'. Perialvar is also called Sri Bhattanatha, Vishnuchitta etc. During his time, the King who ruled Madura was the Pandya ruler, Vallabha Deva Raya. He convened a conference of all Vidvans and sages of his time to decide the 'Paratatva'. It is said that Perialvar attended the conference on the directions of the Lord and established that the Paratatva was 'Sriman Narayana'.[1] It is then said that a Vidya sulka nidihi, the prize tied in the royal courthall fell down at the feet of Perialvar, proving that he alone was eligible for the treasure. Some of his verses show the emotions of a love-lorn maiden pining for the love of her Lord Krishna. Andal, also called Goda Devi, was the foster daughter of Perialvar. She is the heroine of the famous Telugu Prabandham 'Amuktamalyada' composed by Sri Krishnadeva Raya, the illustrious Vijayanagar Emperor. Goda Devi, also called Andal after

1. From *Nityanusandhanam*, (Telugu) Vavilla Ramswami Sastrulu & Sons, Madras, 1953.

her Union with the Lord, was in the habit of herself wearing the garlands made for the 'malakainkaryam' of the Lord, looking at herself in a mirror to ensure that the garlands were worthy enough to be decorated for the Lord and then utilising them for the worship of the Lord. On one day Perialvar noticed Goda wearing the Lord's garlands and chastised her for the sin committed by her. That night Lord Vishnu is said to have appeared to him and informed him that the garlands worn first by Goda were acceptable as well as dear to him !

Goda Devi was a devotee of Lord Vishnu and desired to wed Vishnu and no other. On her request, Perialvar described the 'Divya Vaibhavam' of the 'Perumals' in the 108 Divya Tirupatis. It is said that she was thrilled when her father described to her the glory of 'Tiruvengadamudaiyan of Tirumaalirumsolai'. She is said to have become unconscious with delight when the glory of Lord Sri Ranganatha of Sri Rangam was described and decided to wed Him. The Lord then accepted her and made her his consort. She is the author of the celebrated work 'Tiruppavai' and 'Nacchiyar Tirumozhi'. She never visited Tirupati and her references to Tirupati follow more or less the conventional descriptions of Vishnu. Her stanzas in Tiruppavai have great emotional appeal and excellence and stress the aspect of love between the love-lorn damsel and her Lord Krishna.

Sri Kulasekhara, the author of 'Perumal Tirumozhi' the next Alwar, was the ruler of the Chera country (Travancore-Cochin) and was a Kshatriya saint devoted to Lord Vishnu. The gold-plated door-step of the Garbha Griham in the Tirumalai temple bears his name and is called Kulasekharappadi. Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar is of the view that he belonged to the 7th century. His love

for Tirumalai was great and in one of his poems he wishes that he should be born as a water or fish or a bush or as menial in the temple or as any other thing on the Tirupati hill howsoever mean to have the privilege of serving the Lord.

Sri Thondaradippodi, a Brahmin saint, our next Alwar was a devotee of Sriranganatha. He is the author of the works 'Tirupallieluchi' and 'Tirumalai'. He is famous in the Telugu country as Vipranarayana. His mode of serving God was by 'mala-kainkarayam' that is by making flower garlands and offering them to the Lord. There is no reference to Tirupati or to the Lord of Tirumalai in his compositions.

The next Alwar, Sri Tiruppanalvar, author of 'Amalanadipiran' (601 A.D.) was also a devotee of Lord Sriranganatha of Srirangam. Only ten of his verses find place in the Tamil Prabandham; and there is only a general mention of the greatness of the Tirumalai temple in his verses.

The last Alwar, Sri Tirumangai, belonged to the Sudra caste and became a saint after leading a riotous life. It is said that he fell in love with a woman who stipulated that she would become his wife if he fed one thousand and eight Brahmins a day for one full year. This he attempted to do by committing dacoities on the high-way. Once Lord Vishnu himself came to test him. And while the dacoit was stripping off the Lord of his ornaments (the ornaments on the toe), he realised who his victim was, and turned into the Lord's devotee. He was a great traveller visiting shrines all over India such as Devaprayag, Badrinath, Ahobilam etc. His references to the Lord of Tirumalai are more or less along the conventional lines. He is the author of the works, 'Peria Tirumozhi', 'Thirukkuruntandakam', 'Thiruneduntan-

dakam', 'Thiruvezikuthirukkai', 'Siriathirumadal' and 'Periathirumadal'.

Several other saints of South India have sung praises of the Lord of Tirumalai. Among them Kshetrayya, Thyagayya, Purandhara Dasa and the great Tallapakam poet Annamacharya, deserve special mention.

Kshetrayya's real name is not known. He was a resident of Muvva, a village in Krishna District in Andhra Pradesh. He toured all the holy Kshetrams in South India and composed songs on them. Hence the name Kshetrayya. He is a devotee of Lord Gopala Krishna of Muvva. All his songs (in Telugu) identify the Lord—wherever He is, whether in Kanchipuram, or Hemadri or Tiruvellore etc.—as Muvva Gopala Krishna. His songs are famous in South India as 'Muvva Gopala Padas' and are usually sung with abhinaya by danseuses. In his songs, Kshetrayya identifies himself with the various kinds of Nayikas pining for the Lord's embrace. The compositions have *Sringara* or Love as their theme. The song below is an outpouring by a *Virahothkantitha Nayika*

It is my passion that has let me down!
Oh! Friend with the face like the Moon!
Envious wenches have borne tales to Him
And its' my passion that has let me down,
Should I go? Should I send an emissary?
Should I venture to inform his well-wishers
You know his mind; you know my state.
Oh! Dame! Entreat Him to forget
And forgive and return unto Me.

. . . . . .

Oh! Friend! Muvva Gopala Sri Venkata Ramana
Joins me in the sport of the Lord of Love!
And the memories of Yesterday

Turn my body into water
With pain and anticipation
The Lord takes his revenge,
And I cannot stand this passion.
Oh! Friend! Unite me with my Lord!

Another 'Padam' starts with the lines 'Muddu Betti Poyinade'.

Giving me a kiss,
He disappeared Oh! Mohanangi
He made a sign and
Entreated that I should not
Prevent Him, kissing me.
.....

A particularly lovely 'padam' of Kshetrayya is by a 'Balintha' (a woman who has given birth and is in the early post-natal period) who entreats her Lord not to press her for the sport of the Lord of Love.

This is no time for thee
Oh! Lord! I shall not leave thee; tarry yet a-while
Dazed by the fullness of my bodily lustre,
Thou desirest to possess me.
And when I chastise thee, thou behavest like a child.
Oh! Rasika! Do not touch me in the breast,
Thy hands are now full of milk
.....Oh! Sri Ranga! Muvva Gopala!
Rein in thy mind for two months more,
And I shall be ever thine.

The great Andhra saint Thyagayya (1767-1847) has also sung the praises of the Lord of Tirumalai. He was a great devotee of Sri Rama and had the good fortune of obtaining darshan of his Ishta Daivam. His *kritis* or compositions on his Ishta Daivam, Sri Rama, are too well known to require mention here. His compositions are all in Telugu and form

the bedrock, foundation, superstructure and glory of Carnatic Music in India. Thyagayya visited Tirupati in the year 1839. In his songs he refers to the Lord of Tirumalai, as 'Tirupateesa (The Lord of Tirupati), Srinivasa, Venkatesa (The Lord of Venkata Hill) Seshagiri Sadana (The One who has Seshachalam as his residence).'

On his entering the temple to worship the Lord, he found that a curtain had been hung up before the Lord of Tirumalai preventing him from having darshan. He then sang his famous *Kriti* in the Gowlipanthu *raga* (Adi talam) starting with the Pallavi "Théré Theeyyaga Rada Loni, Tirupati Venkata Ramana, Matsaramanu"—"Why not remove the curtain, Oh! Tirupati Venkata Ramana! Why not remove the inner curtain of Envy (in Men)." It is said that the curtain string snapped and that the curtain dropped down instantaneously revealing the Lord's glory to Thyagayya! Another famous *Kriti* he sang (in the Madhyamavathi *raga,* Adi talam) on the Lord of Tirumalai starts with the Pallavi "Venkatesa Ninu Sevimpanu Padivela Kannulu Kavalenayya". It is this song that contains the famous 'Charana' in it, "Ye, Nomu Phalamo Nee Namamruta Panamu Anu Sopanamu Dorikenu."

"Oh! Venkatesa! A thousand eyes are indispensable to regard Thee!
To see Thy divya-rupa manifest to sages blessed and free
Oh! Lotus-eyes One! A thousand eyes are needed.
. . . . . .
As the fruit of some bygone age's worship
I have, I have, found the way
To imbibe the nectar of Thy name
Oh! Lord of Lakshmi! Giver of Joy!
. . . . . ."

Thyagayya is said to have sung a third song on Lord

Sri Venketeswara starting with Pallavi "Tharama Nee Mahima Pogada". 'Is it possible (for me) to sing Thy praises?' He is the author of several other Vishnu Kirtans. One Kirtana in the Udaya Ravi Chandra *raga* starting with the Pallavi "Yentha Nerchina, Yentha Juchina, Yentha Varalyna Kantha Dasule" is famous, for its pithy message to men of the materialistic world. The gist of the kirtan is as follows:

Whatever the learning,
Whatever the wisdom,
Whatever the greatness,
In spite of all these
Man is slave to Woman
Until he is a slave
To thoughts that lead
To Srikantha, the Lord of Lakshmi.
Man tells lies and desires
For Woman; for fortune, Living and fame
Which do not belong to him,
Gives pain and invites scandal,
Oh! Lord! Praised be by Thyagayya!

Purandhara Dasa, the great Saint of Mysore, famous for his Krithis on 'Vittal' is also said to have visited Tirumalai and sung the praises of the Lord. Tallapaka Annamacharya is then said to have requested him to sing a few of his compositions and declared that Purandhara Dasa was an incarnation of Shri Panduranga Vittalanatha. Annamacharya in his turn was requested by Purandhara Dasa to sing a few of his compositions. Purandhara Dasa is then said to have declared that Annamacharya was an incarnation of Lord Srinivasa!

The Tallapaka poets of Tallapaka village in Cuddapah District who have composed several songs on the Lord of

Tirumalai then deserve consideration. All the songs composed by these poets have been engraved on copper plates and preserved in the Tirumalai temple in an 'arai or closet called the 'Tallapaka Arai'. Two bas-reliefs are to be seen on the stone walls of the 'Arai' in the Vimana-Pradakshinam of the temple. They show figures of Tallapaka Annamacharya, the greatest of the Tallapaka poets and his son Peda Tirumalacharya.

Tallapaka Annamacharya was born in the year 1414 and lived to the ripe old age of 92 years and expired in the year 1503. He has to his credit thirty two thousand compositions on the Lord. These are all in the Yoga, Vairagya and Sringara styles. One of the Tallapaka poets Chinnaya considered to be the father of the Bhajana or devotional song in South India has also composed several 'bhajana' songs.

The songs of Tallapaka poets are to this day sung in the temple of Tirumalai, especially at the time of the Lord's Ekanatha Seva. A descendant of the Tallapaka poets is given the honour of singing them.

A free translation of one of the Sringara compositions of Annamacharya is given below:

The love of the spouse
Unto her Lord should be like this
Striving for thy happiness always.
Oh! Lord! In sport you pulled her Payyada-Kongu[1]
And the flowers from her hair showered on thee
And the Lord of Love then showered his arrows on her
And she dazzled and struck, embraced thee.
And while you sported with her
The dust of camphor (from her body)
Clung to thee!

1. The portion of the saree covering the chest and which dangles freely at the back.

While the Moon was showering silvery beams
Thy consort in ecstasy embraced thee!
Oh! Lord of the Venkata Hill
In dalliance with thy consort
Thou perspirest, With drops of sweat
Spouting out of thee like from a pump
And thy astonished bride
Impeaches thee softly and clings to you
In a long long embrace.

The Eka Murthi Temple:—In the previous Chapter, it has been mentioned that the temple of the Lord of Tirumalai is unique in that it is an Eka Murthi temple. In such a temple, the Vimanam is to be found on the Garbha Griha only and the Garbha Griham is square in shape.

The Eka Murthi temple is one in which there is only one Mula-murthi in the sanctum-sanctorum.

CHAPTER VI

ANANDA NILAYA VIMANAM

The holy gopuram or tower over the Garbha Griha of a temple is called the Vimana. The Vimana, the thirtham, the stalavriksham or sacred tree of a Kshetram, the Perumal or the Lord and the Thayar or the Lord's consort are usually considered the 'Musts' for every temple in South India. The shrine itself is complete when it has (1) the Garbha Griha or the sanctum-sanctorum, (2) the Bimbam or the Image in the shrine and (3) the Vimanam or tower on the top of the Garbha Griham. Sometimes the term 'Vimanam' is used as a synonym for the temple itself as in the Bhavishyottara Purana.

The word Vimana comes from the root 'Ma' which is preceded by the sound 'V' and is supposed to measure and is considered to be a representation of the Cosmos. The Vimanam on the Lord's temple at Tirumalai is called the Anandanilaya Vimanam.

"*Ananda janakathvattamananda Nilayam Viduhu*"

Ananda stands for bliss, nilaya is the house and Anandanilaya is the Abode of Bliss. The Tirumalai temple is an abode of bliss. Therefore we may agree that the Vimana of the temple is aptly called Anandanilaya Vimanam. This Vimana is supposed to inspire the very best in mankind by its very sight and lead them to Ultimate Bliss. From another point of view, the ascent of the seven hills of Tirumalai and the first vision of Anandanilaya Vimanam of the temple on the Ananda Hill represents the ascent of the Kundalini Shakti in the human body to the Sriman Narayana reclining on a Sahasra-dala-Padma and the achievement of Oneness with the Eternal One.

The Vimanam on the temple of the Lord is a celestial

Vimanam. The Varaha Puranam mentions that when the Lord manifested himself on the Swami Pushkarini, it was in a Divya Vimanam which arrived from Sri Vaikuntam. Lord Brahma on perceiving the Divya Vimanam praised it as

इदं तु दिव्यं परमाद्भुतं शुभं विमानमिन्द्रादिनिषेव्यमाणम् ।
विभाति विष्णोरिव मंन्दिरं परं पश्याम सर्वे वयमद्भुतं गृहम् ।।

The Varaha Puranam also mentions that this Divya Vimanam of Vaikuntam will be invisible to mortal eyes in Kaliyuga and that men will construct a separate Vimanam for the Lord.

The Bhavishyottara Puranam also mentions about the Divya Vimanam as follows·

तत आनंदनिलये तोण्डमान्नृपनिर्मिते ।
विमानाग्रे श्रीनिवासो रराज भगवान् हरिः ।।

From this quotation it is clear that the first Vimanam[1] for the Lord by man was constructed by Thondaiman Chakravarthi. The kind of the temple actually constructed by Thondaiman Chakravarthi as well as the details of the Vimanam constructed by him are not known to us, the only references to the temple and the Vimanam constructed by him being only legendary. The structures put up if any had only a short life. From a study of the architecture of the Garbha Griham it has already been mentioned that the Tirumalai temple cannot be dated earlier than the 8th century A.D. Perhaps the existing Vimanam at Tirumalai was first constructed round about the period indicated above. At any rate, this cannot be later than the year 1262 A.D.

The first time the Vimanam was gilded was during the time of the Vijayanagar King Veera Narasingadeva. It is said that this king preformed the Thulārohana ceremony of

1. Used as a synonym for the temple including the Vimanam.

weighing himself in scales against gold and presented all the gold to the temple for gilding the Vimanam of the temple. The relevant inscription[1] found on the door-jamb wall of the Padikkavali gopuram in Tirumalai temple reads as follows: "Hail, Prosperity! The prosperous king Vira-Nrisimha-deva, having conquered the enemies in war, extended his fame over the earth and wedded the Goddess of Prosperity with the emblems of a garland, an elephant, a white umbrella and other insignia (of royalty), and, having performed the Tularohana (ceremony), made Venkatagiri (Tirumala), through (the presentation, of) the weighing gold, equal to Suragiri (Mount Meru)." The King Veera Narasinga-devaraya of the Yadava Rayas was a powerful Raja of Thondamandalam comprising of the zamindari tracts of Kalahasti and Karvetinagara, together with portions of the Chingleput and Chittoor districts, the religious centres of Tiruvorriyur, Kalahasti and Tirupati being included within it.[2] The presentation of gold by him was obviously for gilding the Vimanam of the temple and to make it shine as Mount Meru. His reign has been calculated to have taken place during the period between 1205 A.D. and 1262 A.D. The gilding of the Vimanam by Veera Narasingadeva Yada-varaya cannot be later than 1262 A.D. The Vimanam must therefore have existed earlier than this date.

Another inscription found on the west face (right side of the first gopuram in Tirumalai temple) reads as follows: "Oh, King Sundara Pandya Deva;—the brilliance (of your body excels) the lustre issued by the golden vase (fixed by you over the temple)".

This inscription refers to Jathavarma Sundara Pandya.

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, Early Inscriptions, (1931) page 123.
2. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, Early Inscriptions (1931) Page 105.

It shows us that Jathavarma Sundara Pandya fixed a 'Kanaka Kalasa' or a vase of gold on the temple Vimana. Jathavarma Sundara Pandya ascended the throne in 1251 A.D. and ruled the Pandya kingdom until 1275 A.D. About the tenth year of his reign, he led his armies to Nellore. On his return journey to Kanchipuram he might have visited the temple and arranged for the fixation of the vase of gold on the temple Vimanam. The date of fixation of the Kalasam is not known, but it should have been during the period between 1251 and 1275 A.D. Perhaps the gilding of the Vimanam by Veera Narasinga Deva as well as the fixation of the Kalasam took place round about the period 1262 A.D.

The next gilding of the temple Vimanam was done by one Saluva Mangideva in the year 1359 A.D. The relevant inscription reads as follows':[1] "Hail, Prosperity: On Saturday, the 10th (lunar) day of the bright fortnight in Ashadha in the (cyclic) year Vikari, corresponding to the victorious Saka year 1281, the illustrious Mahamandalesvara Misaraganda Mangideva Maharaja fixed a golden Sikhara (vase) over the Vimana (dome) of Tirumaladeva (Tiruvengadanatha). May prosperity abide". The inscription indicates that a golden sikhara, that is a vase, was fixed over the Vimana of the Tirumalanayaka temple. The Vimanam itself was also covered with gilded copper plates. This Saluva Mangideva was a General under Kumarakampana Vadayar.

The next benefactor associated with the renovation of the Vimana is Amatyasekhara Mallanna, a Minister under Devaraya II. Mallanna was also called Sri Madhavadasar and was a minister under Devaraya II. He not only constructed the Tirumamani mantapam in front of the central shrine, but also renovated Ananda Vimanam over the sanc-

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, Early Inscriptions, (1931) page 168.

tum as can be surmised from a few readable broken sentences in inscription No. 235 T.T. which reads as follows.[1] "I.. being the disciple.... 2....Sri Madhavadasar....3.... Ananda-Vimana....4....executed....5.... Panam...".. The broken sentences include the critical words Sri Madhavadasar and Ananda-Vimana. We may not therefore be wrong in assuming that Sri Madhavadasar renovated the temple Vimanam. From the inscriptions of Tirumalai, it is seen that the dates of his earliest and latest inscriptions are 13-3-1409 and 2-10-1444 A.D. respectively. His construction of the Tirumamani mantapam in the temple was in 1417 A.D. We may not be wrong in assuming that the renovation of the Ananda Vimanam was also round about the year 1417 A.D. and at any rate not later than the year 1444 A.D.

Sri Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagar fame is the next in our list of benefactors who improved the Anandanilaya Vimana. The inscription[2] reproduced below indicates that he got the Divya Vimanam of the Lord Venkateswara gilded in the year Bahudhanya corresponding to 9-9-1518 A.D.

"Hail! Prosperity! Sriman Maharajadhiraja Rajaparameswara Mururayana-ganda Ariyarayavibhata Ashtadikrayamanobhayankara Bhashagutappuvarayana-ganda Purvadakshina-paschima-samudradhisvara Yavanarajya-sthapanacharya Gajapati-Vibhata Sri Virapratapa Sri Vira Krishnadeva Maharaya—

"Started from his capital Vijayanagara, on an eastern expedition, occupied the fort Udayagiri, captured Rautaraya Mahapatra, in one single campaign took Addanki, Vinukonda, Bellamkonda, Nagarjunikonda, Tangeda, Ketavaram and other forts situated on hills and plains, next marched

1. *T. T. D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, Early Inscriptions (1931) page 189.
2. *T. T. D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. III, Inscriptions of Sri Krishnanarayan's time, pp. 183-184.

to Kondavidu fortress, laid siege to it, erected square sheds round the fort, demolished the rampart walls, occupied the citadel, captured alive Virabhadraraya, son of Prataparudra Gajapati, Naraharideva, son of Kumara Hamvirapatra, Rachuru Mallukhan, Uddandakhan, Janyala Kesavapatra, Pusapati Rachiraja, Srinatharaja Lakshmipatiraja, Paschimabalachandra Mahapatra and other Patrasamantas and Manneyers (Zamindars), granted them their lives and proceeded to Dharanikota-Amaresvara performing Tulapurusha Mahadana, returned to Vijayanagara, ruled the country;

"And again launching upon an expedition against Kalingadesa, proceeded to Bezawada, occupied the fortress of Kondapalli, captured alive Praharaja-Siraschandra-Mahapatra, Botajana Mahapatra, Bijilikhan and others who were ruling over the fort, granted them their lives, in one single attack took possession of Anantagiri, Undrakonda, Urlakonda, Aruvapalli, Jallipalli, Kandikonda, Kappaluvayi, Nallamkonda, Kambammettu, Sankaragiri and other forts in the Telugurajya, reached Simhadri-potnuru, planted a pillar of victory and performed a Mahadanam there and then returned to Rajamahendravara, had Mahadanas performed by his queens Chinnadeviamman and Tirumaladeviamman and then went back to Vijayanagara and when ruling the country;

"On Thursday, combine with the star Svati, being the 5th lunar day of the bright fortnight of the Kanya month in the cyclic year Bahudhanya current with the Saka year 1440, completed the gilding work of the Divya-Vimanam of Sri Venkatesa as his dharman (charity)".

The gilding was obviously done by Krishnadevaraya after his triumphant march from Rajamundry to Vijayanagaram.

The Vimanam was also gilded in the year 1630 A.D. by one Koti Kanyakadanam Thathacharya of Kanchi.

The gold kalasa over the Vimanam was again fixed by one Ramalakshmanadasa, one of the brother disciples of Sri Mahanth Prayagadasa in the year 1908 A.D. The relevant inscription reads as follows:[1] "Salutation to Sri Venkatesa. Ramalakshmanadasa, one of the brother-disciples of Mahant Prayagadasa, the then Vicharanakarta of these Devasthanams arranged for the fixing of the kanaka-kalasa (golden vase) over the Vimanam of Venkateswara's central shrine on the 5th lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month of Asvayuja in the year Kilaka, current with the Kaliyuga year 5010".

The latest renovation and rebuilding of the Vimanam was done by the Tirupati-Tirumalai Devasthanam Committee a few years ago. The Committee got the Gopuram completely rebuilt in the year 1958. The decision to repair the leaky Vimana was taken in the year 1952 and the work started on 16th June 1953 after the construction of a Balalayam transferring the thejas of the Mula-murthi to a bimbam in the Kalyana mantapam. The renovation was done at a cost of Rs. 18 lakhs using about 12,000 tolas of gold costing Rs. 12 lakhs. The casting of the copper plates required costed about Rs. 2.5 lakhs.

The Anandanilaya Vimana[2] is a three-storeyed structure with a square base of 27′ 4″ and a height of 37′ 8″ including the kalasa over the Garbha Griha. It has three storeys, the first, second and third measuring 10′, 10′ 9″ and 16″ 3″. The first two tiers are rectangular in shape while the third is circular in shape. The Vimanam at present is completely gilded. Gilded copper sheets have been fixed to the original Vimanam and the space between the sheets and the Vimanam filled up with cement concrete.

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series* Vol. VI, Part I, Inscriptions of Venkatapatiraya's time, pp. 225-226.
2. *Ananda Nilaya Vimanam*—an article by the Architect V. M. Narasimham, T.T. Devasthanam's Bulletin, 27-8-1958.

Only a few bas reliefs are seen on the first tier of the Anandanilaya Vimanam. There are about forty such figures on the second tier and these include figures such as Anjaneya, Garuda in the *anjali hasta* pose, seated Vishnu with four arms, Trivikrama, Lakshmi, Kodandapani Rama, Kaliyaphanimardana Krishna etc. The Vimana Venkateswara is to be seen on this tier. This image is a small replica of the Lord's image in the sanctum. It is interesting in this connection to remember that Vyasa Raja or Vyasa thirtha, the famous Madhva Saint was in the habit of worshipping this Vimana Srinivasa and then only taking his food for the day. The pilgrims of the Madhva community to this day read the Puranas in the Vimana Pradakshina after worshipping the Vimana Srinivasa. The third tier consists of about twenty bas-reliefs. It has the figure of a lotus or a Mahapadmam on it. The lovely standing lion figures on the Vimana are worth seeing among the 'bimbas' of the Vimanam. The bas-reliefs of this tier include Vishnu murthi with four arms in the *Sukhaasana* pose, Garuda etc. The forms of Vishnu on the Vimana are those of the Param, Vyuham, Vibhavam, Antaryamin and Archa forms, according to one view.

The Maha samprokshanam or the purificatory and blessing ceremony of the Divya Vimanam took place at Tirumalai in the last week of August, 1958. The Ananda Nilaya Vimanam has since then been gladdening the hearts of weary pilgrims who went their way up the seven hills of Tirumalai to worship the Lord.

CHAPTER VII

SRI VENKATESWARA SUPRABHATAM

'Suprabhatam' is the *Melukolupu* or the waking up ceremony of the Lord of Tirumalai every morning. This ceremony is performed every day in the Tirumalai temple before dawn at about 4 A.M. The priests and the devotees who congregate for the 'Suprabhatam' assemble near the 'Bangaru Vakili' of the Golden Gate, in the sixteen-pillared Tirumamani mantapam and sing the praises of the Lord. These slokas awakening the Lord and at the same time invoking his blessings were composed (according to tradition) by one Prativadi Bhayankara Annan, said to be a contemporary of the great Visisthadvaitic sage Sri Vedanta Desika.[1] The composer of the Suprabhatam being considered a contemporary of Sri Vedanta Desika, we may roughly take it that the Suprabhatam might have been composed in the later years of the fourteenth century. The singing of these slokas in the temple might have therefore commenced in the later years of the fourteenth century or perhaps even a little later. The Vedas were being chanted in the temple before the fifteenth century, as we know that Sri Virapratapa Devaraya Maharaya ordered the congregational singing of the Vedas in Tirumalai in the year 1430 A.D., thus restarting a practice which had long gone into disuse. It is possible that the Suprabhatam formed a part of the congregational singing of the Holy books in the temple in the fifteenth century.

The Suprabhatam is an impressive devotional poem

1. Sri Vedanta Desika, a native of Kanchipuram, was born in the year 1268 and is said to have expired after living a full hundred years in the year 1368.

comprising of twenty-nine slokas. Another stotram, the Sri Venkateswara stotram comprising of eleven Sanskrit slokas also sings the praises of Sri Venkateswara. This Suprabhatam however is unique for its content of intense devotion to Vishnu. The first thirteen verses have a higher poetic and emotional value than the remaining sixteen verses. Some of the verses have a fanatical tinge in playing down Siva and other Gods, and give a pointer to the conflicts between Vaishnavism and Saivism in the fourteenth century in South India.

Assuming that the singing of these hymns started in 1430 A.D. the year in which Sri Virapratapa Deva Raya Maharaya ordered Vedaparayanam in the temple, it will be seen that these hymns have been sung in the temple for about 542 years at least and have thus attained great value also. Hinduism has recognised among all the world's religions, the oneness of all Gods. Beautiful phrases like 'Jagadeka Dayaika Sindho', 'Jagadeka Saranyamurthaye,' 'Samsara Sagara Samuttaranaikasetho' which are used by the author, indicate that he adored Vishnu as the One, and the Only God.

The gist of the slokas of the Suprabhatam has been given below. Some of the verses lend themselves to slightly different interpretations. These aspects have not been commented upon while translating the slokas. The simplest and most acceptable interpretation has only been given, keeping in view the need for brevity.

१. कौसल्या सुप्रजा राम पूर्वा सन्ध्या प्रवर्तते ।
उत्तिष्ठ नरशार्दूल कर्त्तव्यं दैवमाह्निकम् ।।

Oh! Noble son of Kousalya! The twilight heraldeth the Dawn. Oh! Purushottama! Awake for the due performance of thy divine nityakarma.

२. उत्तिष्ठोतिष्ठ गोविन्द उत्तिष्ठ गरुडध्वज ।
उत्तिष्ठ कमलाकान्त त्रैलोक्यं मङ्गलं कुरु ।।

Awake Oh! Govinda! awake awake! Thou with the Garuda Pennant! awake! Thou consort of Kamala! Awake to bestow all Mangalams on the three worlds.

३. मातस्समस्तजगतां मधुकैटभारेः वक्षोविहारिणि मनोहरदिव्यरूपे ।
श्रीस्वामिनि श्रितजनप्रियदानशीले श्रीवेङ्कटेशदयिते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Mother of all the worlds that dwelleth on the vaksha of the Destroyer of the demons Madhu and Kaitabha! Oh! Manohara Divyamurthi! Oh! Mahalakshmi, thou Bestower of wishes on thy devotees seeking thy protection, Oh! Consort of Lord Venkateswara! Suprabhatam to you (Awake!).

४. तव सुप्रभातमरविन्दलोचने भवतु प्रसन्नमुखचन्द्रमण्डले ।
विधिशङ्करेन्द्रवनिताभिरर्चिते वृषशैलनाथदयिते दयानिधे ।।

An auspicious day is dawning for thee! Thou, Beloved of the Lord of Vrishabhadri! Oh! Lotus eyed One with the moon-like face of beauty! Thou art extolled by the Consorts of Brahma, Siva and Indra! Thou treasure-house of *Daya* or Kindness! Awake.

५. अत्र्यादिसप्तऋषयस्समुपास्य सन्ध्यां आकाशसिन्धुकमलानि मनोहराणि
आदाय पादयुगमर्चयितुं प्रपन्नाः शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Oh! Lord of the Seshadri Peak! Atri and other sapta rishis after their morning sandhya, have gathered lotuses from Akasa Ganga and await thee, to decorate and worship thy twin feet! May thy auspicious day commence.

६. पञ्चाननाब्जभवषण्मुखवासवाद्याः त्रैविक्रमादिचरितं विबुधाः स्तुवन्ति ।
भाषापतिः पठति वासरशुद्धिमारात् शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Oh! Lord of the Seshadri Peak! Maheswara, Brahma, Kumaraswami, Mahendra and other supernal beings chant thy hymns as Trivikrama. Brihaspathi is reading the almanac for you nearby! Awake.

७. ईषत्प्रफुल्लसरसीरुहनारिकेलपूगद्रुमादिसुमनोहरपालिकानाम् ।
आवाति मन्दमनिलस्सह दिव्यगन्धैः शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

A gentle breeze loaded with the fragrance of half opened lotuses, coconuts, palms and other scented plants is blowing for thee! Oh! Lord of the Seshadri Peak! Awake.

८. उन्मील्य नेत्रयुगमुत्तमपञ्चरस्थाः पात्रावशिष्टकदलीफलपायसानि ।
भुक्त्वा सलीलमथ केलिशुकाः पठन्ति शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

The fancy parakeets with dilated eyes kept in worthy cages partake again the bananas and *payasam* left in the feeding vessels and sing gaily for thee! Oh! Lord of the Seshadri Peak! Suprabhatam to you.

९. तन्त्रीप्रकर्षमधुरस्वनया विपञ्च्या गायत्यनन्तचरितं तव नारदोऽपि ।
भाषासमग्रमसकृत्करचाररम्यं शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

The Sage Narada dexterously manipulates his sweet music-giving Vipanchi-Veena while he sings eloquent praises to thee! Oh! Ananta! Oh! Lord of the Seshadri Peak! Awake.

१०. भृङ्गावली च मकरन्दरसानुविद्धझङ्कारगीतनिनदैस्सह सेवनाय ।
निर्यात्युपान्तसरसीकमलोदरेभ्यः शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Imbibing well the nectar of flowers, swarms of bees are emerging out of lotuses in the lakes, with humming notes of music to worship thee! Oh! Lord of the Seshadri Peak! Suprabhatam to you.

११. योषागणेन वरदध्नि विमथ्यमाने
घोषालयेषु दधिमन्थनतीव्रघोषाः ।
रोषात्कलिं विदधते ककुभश्च कुम्भाः
शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Curds are being churned in the households of cowherds by women. The echoes of the churning sounds appear as though the pots of curd and the bearings of the Universe are having an argument with each other. Oh! Lord of the Seshadri Hill! Awake.

१२. पद्मेशमित्रशतपत्रगतालिवर्गाः
हर्तुं श्रियं कुवलयस्य निजाङ्गलक्ष्म्या ।
भेरीनिनादमिव बिभ्रति तीव्रनादम्
शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

The Sun is the friend of the hundred-petalled lotus. The bees emerging out of such lotuses with their bodily lusters are stealing (or endeavouring to steal) the glory of the dark-coloured lotuses (*Kuvalayasya*) by buzzing aloud. Oh! Lord of the Seshadri Hill! Suprabhatam to you.

१३. श्रीमन्नभीष्टवरदाखिललोकबन्धो श्रीश्रीनिवास जगदेकदयैकसिन्धो ।
श्रीदेवतागृहभुजान्तरदिव्यमूर्ते श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Oh! Lord of Lakshmi who bestoweth boons! Kinsman of all the worlds! Sri Srinivasa! The only One in the whole of the Universe who art the Ocean of Kindness! Oh! Divya-murthi who art the residence of Lakshmi! Oh! Venkata-chalapati! Awake!

१४. श्रीस्वामिपुष्करिणिकाऽऽप्लवनिर्मलाङ्गाः
श्रेयोऽर्थिनो हरविरिञ्चसनन्दनाद्याः ।
द्वारे वसन्ति वरवेत्रहतोत्तमाङ्गा[1]
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Brahma, Maheswara, Sanandana and others after a purificatory bath in the Swami Puskharini await thee near thy door with staffs and with bent heads. Oh! Lord of Venkata Hill! Awake.

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1. I believe the words 'Hatha' in 'Varavetra Hatottamanga' is out of place and the correct text is 'Varavetra Natottamanga'. The former phrase is usually translated as with Uttamangas or heads being beaten by Vara Vetras or quality canes wielded by the Vetrahastas or Dwarapalakas in the temple'. Such an interpretation is *prima facie* absurd. 'Varavetra Natottamanga' reads better in the context. Another possible interpretation for 'Varavetra Natottamanga' is that the Uttamapurusha deities are present without their weapons.

१५. श्रीशेषशैलगरुडाचलवेङ्कटाद्रि
नारायणाद्रिवृषभाद्रिवृषाद्रिमुख्याम् ।
आख्यां त्वदीयवसतेरनिशं वदन्ति
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Thy residence is for ever being called variously as Sri Seshasailam, Garudachalam, Venkatadri, Narayanadri, Vrishabhadri etc. Oh! Sri Venkatachalapati! Awake.

१६. सेवापराशिवसुरेशकृशानुधर्म रक्षोऽम्बुनाथपवमानधनाधिनाथाः ।
बद्धाञ्जलिप्रविलसन्निजशीर्षदेशाः श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Oh ! Lord of Venkata Hill ! Siva, Indra, Agni, Yama, Nairuthi, Varuna, Vayu and Kubera with anjali hasthas wait for thee to worship thee! Oh! Sri Venkatachalapati! Awake.

१७. धाटीषु ते विहगराजमृगाधिराज
नागाधिराजगजराजहयाधिराजाः ।
स्वस्वाधिकारमहिमाधिकमर्थयन्ते
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

The Lords among birds, animals, snakes, elephants and horses, Garuda, Simha, Adisesha, Iravata and Vucchaisrava respectively (await to) solicit thy favour during thy outings to gain in merit and importance. Oh ! Sri Venkatachalapati ! Awake.

१८. सुर्येन्दुभौमबुधवाक्पतिकाव्यसौरि स्वर्भानुकेतुदिविषत्परिषत्प्रधानाः।
त्वद्दासदासचरमावधिदासदासाः श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

The prominent deities of the Devasabha, Surya, Chandra, Angaraka, Budha, Guru, Sukra, Sani, Rahu and Ketu, await thee (even) as servitors to thy lackeys of the last degree. Oh ! Sri Venkatachalapati ! Awake.

१९. त्वत्पादधूलिभरितस्फुरितोत्तमाङ्गाः
स्वर्गापवर्गनिरपेक्षनिजान्तरङ्गाः ।
कल्पागमाकलनयाऽऽकुलतां लभन्ते
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Thy devotees that shine by wearing thy dust on their heads, desire not either Heaven or Moksha; they grieve that another 'kalpa' may deny them thy grace.[1] Oh ! Sri Venkatachalapati! Awake.

२०. त्वद्गोपुराग्रशिखराणि निरीक्षमाणाः
स्वर्गापवर्गपदवीं परमां श्रयन्तः ।
मर्त्या मनुष्यभुवने मतिमाश्रयन्ते
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Men who have been blessed with Mukti and others who are on their way to Heaven notice the Gopuram and shikaram on thy temple and desire to be (reborn) on the Earth (to serve thee). Oh! Sri Venkatachalapati! Awake.

२१. श्रीभूमिनायक दयादिगुणामृताब्धे
देवाधिदेव जगदेकशरण्यमूर्ते ।
श्रीमन्ननन्तगरुडादिभिरर्चिताङ्घ्रे
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Sri Venkatachalapati ! Thou art the Lord of Sri Devi and Bhudevi ! Thou art verily the ocean of Kindness and other Gunas ! Oh ! Devadi Deva ! Thou art the Only Refuge for the entire Universe ! Oh ! Lord ! Thou art the One whose feet are worshipped by Ananta, Garuda and others! Oh! Sri Venkatachalapati Awake.

२२. श्रीपद्मनाभ पुरुषोत्तम वासुदेव
वैकुण्ठ माधव जनार्दन चक्रपाणे ।
श्रीवत्सचिह्न शरणागतपारिजात
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

1. A 'kalpa' runs for about a few lakhs of years. According to tradition, the Lord of Tirumalai is the Deity for Kaliyuga, in the Sweta Varahakalpam. The position may change in the Kalpa that follows. Hence the grief and the distress of the devotees of the Lord of Tirumalai.

Oh ! Sri Venkatachalapati ! Sri Padmanabha ! Purushottama ! Vasudeva ! Vaikunta ! Madhava ! Janardana ! Chakrapani ! Thou art the One with the Srivatsa mole on thy body ! Thou art like the Parijatha boon-bestowing-tree to those that seek thy protection! Awake.

२३. कन्दर्पदर्पहरसुन्दरदिव्यमूर्ते
कान्ताकुचाम्बुरुहकुड्मललोलदृष्टे ।
कल्याणनिर्मलगुणाकरदिव्यकीर्ते
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Oh ! Divyamurti ! Thy handsome form is the corrective to Manmatha's vain-glory (that he is handsome !). Oh ! Lord with thy gaze fixed on the lotus-bud-like breasts of thy consort ! Thou art renowned for thy auspicious and blemishless qualities (of goodness) ! Oh ! Sri Venkatachalapati ! Awake.

२४. मीनाकृते कमठ कोल नृसिंह वर्णिन्
स्वामिन् परश्वथतपोधन रामचंद्र ।
शेषांशराम यदुनन्दन कल्किरूप
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Oh ! Lord ! Thou art (verily no other than) the Avatars of Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parasurama, Sri Rama, Balarama, Sri Krishna and Kalki. Oh! Sri Venkatachalapati! Awake.

२५. एलालवङ्गघनसारसुगन्धतीर्थं
दिव्यं वियत्सरिति हेमघटेषु पूर्णम् ।
धृत्वाऽद्य वैदिकशिखामणयः प्रहृष्टाः
तिष्ठन्ति वेङ्कटपते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Scholars well-versed in the Vedas, carrying on their heads receptacles of gold containing the fragrant waters of the Akasa Ganga well spiced with cardamoms, cloves and Pacchaikarpuram, are waiting for thee in joy (to worship thee!). Oh! Venkatachalapati! Awake.

२६. भास्वानुदेति विकचानि सरोरुहाणि
संपूरयन्ति निनदैः ककुभो विहङ्गाः ।
श्रीवैष्णवास्सततमर्थितमङ्गलास्ते
धामाश्रयन्ति तव वेङ्कट सुप्रभातम् ।।

Oh! Lord of Venkata Hill! The Sun is rising. The lotuses are opening out in full bloom. The birds are filling the air with birdsound. And the Srivaishnavas wishing for eternal auspiciousness wait for thee! Awake.

२७. ब्रह्मादयस्सुरवरास्समहर्षयस्ते
सन्तस्सनन्दनमुखास्तव योगिवर्याः ।
धामान्तिके तव हि मङ्गलवस्तुहस्ताः
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Brahma and other celestials, Satpurusha yogis such as Sanandana and other sages with auspicious articles of worship in their hands await thee! Oh! Sri Venkatachalapati! Awake.

२८. लक्ष्मीनिवास निरवद्यगुणैकसिन्धो संसारसागरसमुत्तरणैकसेतो ।
वेदान्तवेद्यनिजवैभव भक्तभोग्य श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

Oh! Abode of Lakshmi! Srinivasa! Thou art verily the ocean for all auspicious and blemishless qualities of goodness! Thou art One and the only bridge to cross the Ocean of Samsara! Thy real glory can be experienced only through (the study of) Vedanta and Upanishads! Oh! Bhakta Bhogya! Sri Venkatachalapati! Awake!

२९. इत्थं वृषाचलपतेरिह सुप्रभातम् ये मानवाः प्रतिदिनं पठितुं प्रवृत्ताः ।
तेषां प्रभातसमये स्मृतिरङ्गभाजां प्रज्ञां परार्थसुलभां परमां प्रसूते ।।

Those reciting these Suprabhatam slokas with Bhakti in the dawn every day will be blessed with 'Prajna' which will finally lead them to Moksha!

CHAPTER VIII

LEGENDS OF THE LORD OF TIRUMALAI

I

Of the various Puranas in existence, 18 puranas are considered to be more sacred as Vyasokta Puranas or Puranas composed by the venerable sage Veda Vyasa. They are the Matsya, Markendeya, Bhagavata, Bhavishya, Brahma, Brahmanda, Brahmakaivastha, Vamana, Vayu, Vishnu, Varaha, Agni, Narada, Padma, Linga, Garuda, Kurma and Skanda Puranas. The *stalamahatmyam* of the temple of the Lord of Tirumalai, also called the Sri Venkatachala Mahatmyam, is mentioned in several Puranas such as Sri Varaha, Padma, Garuda, Brahma, Markandeya, Vamana, Brahmottara, Kanda, Aditya and Bhavishyottara Puranas. Of these the more important Puranas giving legends of the Lord of Tirumalai are the Varaha Puranam and Bhavishyottara Puranam. It shall be our endeavour in this Chapter to make a brief study of the legends mentioned in the various Puranas.

Part A of this Chapter deals with the legends from Varaha Puranam; Part B gives the legends from the Bhavishyottara Puranam, while Part C gives important legends from other Puranams.

Part A:—Sri *Venkatachala Mahatmyam* in the Varaha Puranam starts with the following invocatory slokas to the Lord of Tirumalai.

श्रियःकान्ताय कल्याणनिधये निधयेऽर्थिनाम् ।
श्रीवेङ्कटनिवासाय श्रीनिवासाय मंङ्गलम् ।।

Oh! Lord of Lakshmi, and Treasure House of all auspicious things and who art a veritable Nidhi for thy devotees,

Thou residest on the Sri Venkata hill, Mangalam (all good auspices) to Thee Oh! Srinivasa!

The sage Suta was once requested by Sownaka and others to enlighten them on Vishnu Kshetrams. Which was the holiest of holy Vishnu Kshetrams? And which was the Kshetram dearest to Vishnu? The sage then gladly imparted his knowledge to them as follows:—

The Vengadam or the Venkata hill is the holiest of Vishnu Kshetrams in India. It is one that bestows all siddhis and all Iyswaryams on mankind. This hill called Seshachalam is a Varaha-Bhumi or a place holy to Lord Vishnu in his Avatar of the white boar. At the time of the *Pralayam* or the primeval flood, the entire universe was submerged under water. At that time Vatapatrasayi Sri Maha Vishnu took the shape of a white boar to rescue the earth from the waters of the flood. The demon Hiranyaksha however opposed him in this and Lord Vishnu destroyed him. Earth was preserved and Vishnu commanded Brahma to recreate life on earth. Lord Vishnu then decided to reside on earth for some time in preference to his ever-joy-giving Vaikuntam. The area south of river Gomati and near the river Suvarna Mukhi was then chosen. To this land, Garuda then brought Narayanagiri, Lord Vishnu's Kridasailam or sporting hill on his wings, and placed it on the spot chosen by the Lord. The holy hill was three *yojanas* long with a base of equal length and had the shape of Sesha, the thousand-headed snake. It was full of flowers and fruit-bearing trees, had a sikharam of gold and was teeming with various kinds of singing birds. The kinnaras sang and danced on it. It was verily Paradise brought on earth! Lord Vishnu in the shape of the Holy White Boar made this hill his home, occupying a Vimana on the western side of the holy Swami Pushkarini. Within a short time Lord Srinivasa

with Conch, Sudarsana Chakra and the Mace, manifested himself in his Divya Vimana on the southern bank of the aforementioned Swami Pushkarini. Vishnu in the Boar form was then worshipped by Brahma, Rudra and other celestials. They requested him to stay on earth and bless and protect them for ever. Lord Vishnu agreed and declared that he would stay on Venkatadri and grant the wishes of his devotees.

Lord Vishnu's Kridadri is known by several other names. It has been variously called Chintamani, Gnanadri, Teerthadri, Pushkaradri, Vrishadri, Kanakadri, Narayanadri, Vaikuntadri, Simhachalam, Anjanadri, Varahagiri and Nilagiri. It is hailed by the name Vrishadri in commemoration of the tapas performed by Yama Dharma Raja on the hill. It is also hailed as Venkatadri; the sound ('Vem') वें is an amrita bijakshara कट: (Kataha) stands for fortune or Iyswaryam. As the hill bestows amritaiswaryams, it is aptly called Venkatadri. It is variously called Srinivasa Giri, Anandadri and Srisailam.

Once Sri Rama on his way to Lanka with his monkey army was camping near the Lord's hill-Seshachalam. Anjana Devi, the mother of Anjaneya, then beseeched him to accept her hospitality on the Venkata hill. Sri Rama agreed. He and his monkey armies camped on Venkatachalam on the banks of the Swami Pushkarini. Sri Rama received the worship of Anjana Devi near the Akasa Ganga Thirtham, and bathed in the Swami Pushkarini along with Lakshmana and his followers. Sri Rama and his followers stayed on the hill in hermitages specially erected for them. One day the monkey heroes Gaksha, Gavaksha, Gavaya, Sharabha, Gandhamadhana in the retinue of Sri Rama's army decided to reconnoitre and investigate a cave which they discovered on the Venkata hill. This cave was the famous cave of Vai-

kuntam. The monkey heroes cautiously entered the cave and the cave led them to a magnificent city inside. They found that words could not describe the glory of the golden city within. The people in the city were all celestial personages with four arms and sported *ayudhas* such as the chakra and the sankha. In the middle of the city was a Vimana. It was gem-studded, shone like the midday Sun and was comparable to the Mountain Meru. It was an architectural beauty. A noble personage was seated in the Vimana. His face resembled that of the full moon. He had four arms. He wore the chakra and the sankha. He was seated on a golden throne, and had a crown studded with precious gems. His consorts Sri Devi and Bhudevi were seated by his side. On his chest shone the glorious Srivatsa and Kaustubha jewels. The monkey heroes were astonished to see such a Divya Manohara Murthi. While they were lost in admiration of the vision of the Lord, some of the celestials chased them out of the cave. They came out but tried to locate the Vaikunta cave again with the assistance of their colleagues, but did not succeed. The Vaikunta cave is unattainable and invisible even for yogis with merit. Even the celestials cannot hope to enter it without the Lord's grace. The monkeys however in Sri Rama's retinue were able to enter it and see the Lord. Verily it is the Lord's play or *leela*!

The daityas, Ravana and others, were then persecuting all good people in the world and harassing them. Unable to stand up to them, Jabali, Kashyapa, Gautama, Agasthya, Vamadeva, Sadananda, Shanaka, Indra and others resolved to seek the assistance of Lord Vishnu to put an end to the misdeeds of miscreants. They therefore proceeded to Sri Vaikuntam and found that Lord Sriman Narayana was on the earth at Venkatachalam. Brahma whose assistance was then sought, advised them that Ravana was a great devotee

of the Lord, that he could be destroyed by Lord Vishnu only and not by others. Lord Vishnu was on the Venkata hill and would soon give darshan to King Dasaratha who was doing penance on the banks of Swami Pushkarini to propitiate Vishnu. Brahma and others therefore went to Venkatadri to obtain darshan of the Lord of Tirumalai.

King Dasaratha who was given *mantropadesham* by his Preceptor Vasishta was at Tirumalai. He bathed in the Swami Pushkarini and sat in *nishta* reciting the Venkatesa Ashtakshari mantra. Brahma and the celestials also prayed to the Lord to obtain his darshan, when lo! there was great illumination and the Lord of Tirumalai revealed Himself to his assembled devotees in a Vimana. It was verily a celestial Vimana with several *gopurams* and *avaranams*. The Vimana had several doors of gold; the doorsteps of the holy residence were decorated with sapphires, emeralds, rubies and other precious gems. It had gopurams with *kalasams* or vessels of glittering gold. It had several beautiful and architectually perfect thousand-pillared mantapams; several vahanams such as chariots, horses, elephants, were in it. Such an auspicious Vimana had never been seen before by mortal eyes. Brahma and the others entered the Vimana to have darshan of the Lord. Siva and others also arrived there post-haste to worship the Lord. The sage Agastya and others then sang the eulogies of the Lord.

नमस्ते यज्ञरूपाय यज्ञभोक्त्रे नमो नमः।
यज्ञकर्ते नमो यज्ञप्रियाय च नमो नमः।

Salutation to thee who art the Roopa of Yagna (embodiment of the sacrificial rites) and the receiver of the Yagnaphalam or the fruit of Yagna (one who enjoys the Yagnaphala). Salutation, to thee again and again. Thou art the Supreme Spirit of Yagna! Salutation to thee who art fond

of Yagnas! Our respectful obeisance to thee again and again.

Indra then commenced his *stotram* with the slokas:

ओं नमो वेङ्कटेशाय शेषाद्रिनिलयाय च ।
सिंहाचलनिवासाय श्रीमन्नारायणाय च ।।

'Om Namo Venkatesaya' is the Sri Venkatesa Ashtakshari mantra. Salutation to Lord Venkatesa, resident of the Seshadri Hill. Salutation to Sriman Narayana, resident of the Simhachala Hill.

Saunaka, Dasaratha and others praised the Lord. Brahma then sang the praises of the Lord and prayed for His protection when the Lord replied "O! Kamalasana! Fear not, I shall protect."

अहमेव गतिर्ब्रह्मन् ! भवतां माऽस्तु तद्भयम् ।
अभयं भवतां दत्तं मया हि कमलासन ! ।।

"In a short time, I shall certainly destroy the cruel Ravana who is a thorn to the universe (a source of vexation to the universe or foe to the universe) along with his relations and retinue." Sanaka and others then prayed to the Lord that He should not be invisible on Venkatachala but must be visible to one and all. The Lord granted this boon and assured Indra that Ravana would be killed soon. The Lord then heard Shankara's request that he should be wherever the Lord Himself is and agreed to this by saying 'I shall stay on Venkatadri until the end of this Kalpa. You shall also stay near this hill'. Dasaratha was then ordained to perform a Yagna in Ayodhya and informed that he would be blessed with four powerful and brave sons. While the others left the Vimana, taking leave of the Lord, Brahma remained. He was then asked 'why standest thou here, what is thy desire?' Brahma then replied: Oh! Lord of the Venkata Hill! Hear and grant me my wish. In the Kaliyuga, people cannot perform tapas and thus deserve thy grace. They

will be weak in body, diseased, lusty by nature and sinners in general. If you are not kind to them, their fate will be the eternal fires of Naraka or Hell. Hence my prayer that thou should manifest Thyself here in Kaliyuga, give them darshan and save them'. And the Lord replied 'I shall do even so. I shall remain on this hill with Sridevi and Bhudevi, granting freely the wishes of my devotees. The tapas, yagnas and yoga done on this hill shall achieve easy results. The Pushkarini on my hill shall be the Swami Pushkarini. The desires of those who bathe in this shall be fulfilled. Those who worship me after a holy bath in this Pushkarini shall have their desires fulfilled without fail!'

The Lord then destroyed the cruel Rakshasas on the Venkata hill region by using his Sudarshana chakra, and also agreed to the performance of his Brahmotsavam on the Venkata hill.

The Varaha Puranam also mentions the leelas of the Lord Venkateswara in Kaliyuga. He will be a *mouni* (maintain silence) in Kaliyuga, and be visible to earthly beings in the archa form. The celestial Vimana from Vaikuntam will be invisible. The Lord of Tirumalai will also be sporting with his consort Lakshmi on the hill. He will continue to be worshipped by the celestials invisible to mortal eyes. The Lord will bestow his blessings on all who seek His grace or think of Him or go on a pilgrimage to the Venkata hill.

"*Venkatesa Samo Devo Nasthi Nasthi Maheetale.*"

None equals Lord Venkateswara—not one—none equals Lord Venkateswara in the entire Universe.

The Varaha Puranam also mentions several other legends showing the leela of Lord Venkateswara. One such is the story of an old Brahmin who was crying out for the assistance of his son Koundinya on the Venkata hill. The Lord Himself then assumed the garb of a youth and taking the

Brahmin by hand took him near a spring of water and ordained him to bathe in the waters of that spring. Lo! the hundred-year-old helpless Brahmin was transformed into a youth! From then onwards, the spring got the name Kumara Dhara. In another instance, the Lord assisted Sankana, a ruler of the lunar dynasty, who had lost his kingdom and was bemoaning his misfortune on the banks of a lake near the river Suvarna Mukhi. A celestial voice ordained him to go on a pilgrimage to Tirumalai and worship the Lord there for six months taking a daily bath in the Swami Pushkarini. The king followed the instructions of his celestial guide, obtained the grace of the Lord of Tirumalai and regained his kingdom.

Another legend in the Varaha Puranam mentions of a poor Brahmin going by the name of Atma Rama. He bathed in the Kapila Thirtham and made a pilgrimage to Venkatachalam. A yogi on the Venkata hill initiated him by giving him mantropadesham and instructed him that he should worship Maha Lakshmi. Atma Rama reciting the mantra took a dip in the holy Pushkarini and obtained the grace of the Lord of Tirumalai.

The Varaha Puranam mentions of seventeen thirthams or springs of water in the Venkatachalam hill area. They include the Swami Pushkarini, Kumara Dhara, Tumburu, Akasha Ganga, Pandava, Papanashanam, Deva, Jabali, Palguni, Kapila, Chakra, Panchayudha, Agni, Brahma, Vishvaksena thirthams etc. The Varaha Puranam mentions that holy baths on certain days in these thirthams will give special results such as *papavimochanam*, happiness and prosperity on earth and Moksha after death.

Another legend concerns Vasuvu, a gardener. Vasuvu and his son Veera were in the habit of cooking 'tandulams' and offering the cooked food as naivedyam to the Lord

along with honey. One day Vasuvu went to the forest to obtain honey for the Lord's naivedyam. On his return he found that his son had taken his daily meal. Vasuvu got angry that his son had misbehaved and he attempted to do away with him, when the Lord of Tirumalai appeared to him and prevented him from killing his son. The Lord explained to the Nishada that his son had already fed him and that he was a great devotee. One other legend concerns the Vishnu Bhakta, Rangadasa. Rangadasa originally belonged to the city of Narayanapuri in Pandya Desa. The Lord graced him by giving him darshan. This Rangadasa then dug a well for the Lord in Venkatadri. On one day, some Gandharvas were sporting themselves in the well constructed by him. Rangadasa who had gone there to gather flowers for the Lord was enchanted by the sight of the Gandharvas and was late for the mala-kainkaryam in the temple. The temple priest chastised him for being late. Rangadasa was shy because of the *apachara* done to the Lord, but the ever gracious Lord gave him darshan. He was informed that he—Rangadasa would be reborn as a king. He would then be a vaishnava bhaktha and construct a Vimanam and a prakaram for the Lord of Tirumalai. Another important legend concerns king Tondaman who was the son of Suveera and Nandinidevi. On one day observing a multicoloured parrot the King chased it. It took him to Venkatachalam. A nishada on the Venkata Hill informed him that the parrot belonged to Lord Srinivasa. King Tondaman then expressed that he very much desired to have darshan of Lord Srinivasa. The nishada led him to Swami Pushkarini. The king bathed in the Swami Pushkarini and had darshan of the Lord of Tirumalai under a tree. Another legend mentions of a nishada by name Vasuvu who chased a white boar which was destroying every day the crops grown by

him on Venkatachalam. One day the chased white boar led Vasuvu to an ant-hill. The boar entered the ant-hill. The angry nishada tried to dig up the ant-hill to trap and kill the boar, but fell unconscious! The nishada and his son were however soon enlightened that the white boar was no other than Lord Vishnu and that the ant-hill should be flooded with milk from a black-coloured cow when the Lord would manifest himself in Venkatachalam in the archa form. Tondaman was from then onwards to arrange for his worship. The nishada went to the king and informed him about the Lord in the ant-hill. Tondaman followed the nishada, flooded the ant-hill and discovered the Lord's archa form in the ant-hill. He then constructed the temple for the Lord of Tirumalai. There were two trees in the temple area; one was a tamarind tree and the other a champaka tree. The Lord informed him that the tamarind tree was sacred to him and that the champaka tree was sacred to Lakshmi. Tondaman also constructed a *prakaram* for the temple.

II

Legends from Bhavishyottara Puranam:—The hill Venkatachalam was called Vrishachalam in Kritayuga, Anjanadri in Tretayuga, and Seshachalam in Dwaparayuga. In Kaliyuga, it bears the name of Venkatachalam. A Rakshasa by name Vrishasura was persecuting Rishis and the people in the area in Kritayuga. He was a devotee of Lord Narasimha and had obtained a boon from him that Vishnu would give him battle as desired by him. Lord Vishnu therefore fought with the demon and killed him with his Sudarshana Chakra. Vrishasura then prayed to the Lord that the hill should bear his name. Hence the name Vrishachalam. The hill is called Anjanachalam as Anjanadevi, the mother of Anjaneya, performed tapas on it.

It also bears the name of Seshasailam in honour of the thousand-headed Sesha. It bears the name of Venkatachalam as it is a hill which burns away all sins. The connected legend is as follows: A Brahmin by name Madhava belonging to Kalahasti fell in love with a *vyabhichari* or a prostitute and lived with her against all the canons of accepted Vedic religion. He became a great sinner, eating meat, and drinking prohibited liquor. After some time his mate died and Madhava followed a party of pilgrims bound for Venkatadri. All his sins were instantaneously burnt away on his coming into contact with the sacred hill of Lord Vishnu. Brahma who then gave darshan to Madhava informed him that Madhava would be reborn as Akasha Raja and rule the whole of Tondamandalam with Narayanapuri as his capital, that the holy mother would be born as his daughter and that Lord Vishnu would then wed her. Brahma also named the hill Venkatadri in commemoration of its powers of burning away all kinds of sins.

Srinivasa Kalyanam with Sri Padmavati:—Long long ago Kasyapa and others were performing a yagna on the banks of the River Jahnavi. A doubt then arose among them about the proper Yagnapurusha who deserved the Yagnaphalam. The sages were not in a position to decide which of the Devas deserved the honour of the Yagnaphalam. Sage Bhrigu was therefore enjoined by the assembly of rishis to resolve the issue. Bhrigu agreed and decided to test and proclaim the One that deserved the worship of Mankind and left for Brahma Loka. Brahma was then adjudged by him to be an Apujya, that is, one who does not deserve worship. He then proceeded to Kailasam and found the Lord sporting with his consort Parvati. Bhrigu therefore decided that he also was unfit for the honour contemplated and left for Vaikuntam, the residence of Lord

Vishnu. Here the Lord Sriman Narayana was reclining on the Sesha and Lakshmi was by his side. Bhrigu was brutal in his behaviour[1] to the Lord, but the Lord was kind and solicitous about the welfare of the sage. The sage therefore decided:

हरिः सर्वोत्तमः साक्षाद्रमा देवी तदन्तरा।

Hari was the uttama Daivatham and his consort Ramaa Devi deserved worship after Him.

Lakshmi however was put out with the Lord and left for Karaveera Kshetram on earth, leaving her Lord in grief. And the Lord poring over ways and means to pacify Lakshmi, left for Venkatadri on earth. On this hill was the Holy Pushkarini and on the banks of the Pushkarini, a tamarind tree. Lord Vishnu's *tejas* or divine *shakti* manifested itself in an ant-hill under the tamarind tree mentioned above.

A thousand years flew by. It was the end of Dwapara-yuga and the Chola kingdom in India was being ruled by a kindly ruler, full of merit. Brahma then took the shape of a cow and Rudra that of a calf. Lakshmi then became a milk-maid and sold the cow and the calf to the Chola king. The celestial cow then found its way to the ant-hill on Venkatachalam where the Lord had taken refuge. The cow emptied its milk on the ant-hill, enabling Lord Srinivasa to drink up the nourishing food. The cow got into the habit of nourishing the Lord thus every day. The cowherd

1. The sage had kicked the Lord on the chest—the abode of Lakshmi. And instead of punishing the sage, the Lord had said to him:

वज्रष्टगुणां विद्धि मच्छरीरे कठोरताम्।
किमर्थं ताडितं विप्र! कोमलाङ्घितलेन तत्॥
पादौ ते कोमलौ दिव्यौ मच्छरीरसमागमात्।
कियद्दुखं समापन्नौ न जानामि द्विजोत्तम॥

in charge of the King's cattle noticed the loss of milk, followed the cow one day and threw his stick at the cow to chastise it. The Lord however received the blow and saved the cow. The cowherd died immediately and the Chola king who arrived later at Venkatachalam to investigate was cursed and became a Pisacham (spirit). On the King's prayer Lord Srinivasa informed him that he would be released from the curse soon, that he would then be reborn as Akasa Raja and that he would gain merit by giving his daughter Padmavati in marriage to him. Akasa Raja would also then present a gem-studded crown of gold to him which he would wear on the evening of every Friday.

Srinivasa then obtained from Vishnu in the Boar form his consent to stay on Venkatachalam. In return Srinivasa promised that Lord Varaha would thenceforth receive the 'Prathama Darshanam' and 'Prathama Naivedyam' of Venkatachalam. The Lord Vishnu in the Boar form placed the services of his 'Sevika' Vakula Malika at the disposal of Srinivasa. Vakula Malika, who was no other than Yasodha Devi of the Krishna Avatar days, who had been promised by the Lord that she would see Him as a Kalyanamurthi in the Kali yuga, looked after Srinivasa as a mother would look after her own child.

At the end of Dwaparayuga and after the great Mahabharatha war, Tonda Desa was being ruled in plenty and prosperity by King Akasa Raja. He had no children. On the advice of his preceptors, he therefore determined to perform a Yagna to beget children. For this purpose, the sacrificial land was being ploughed when lo! a thousand-petalled lotus was discovered in the Yagnavatika. In the lotus was a baby. She was Beauty personified and was no other than an *amsa* of Sri Lakshmi, born to wed Lord Srinivasa. The king and his queen Dharuni Devi were

happy that the Lord had blessed them thus with a daughter. A celestial voice then told them "Oh! king! She is thy daughter. Protect her. She will get immortal fame". The precious infant was named Padmavati, as she was found in a Padma or lotus.

The foundling child soon grew up into a very beautiful young girl. One day the sage Narada appeared to her as an old 'tapasvi' in the royal presence, read her palm and predicted that she would be the chosen bride of Lord Vishnu. That very day the bridegroom Srinivasa was hunting in the Venkatachalam forests. During his sport, he espied a wild elephant and pursued it to the royal pleasure-gardens where Padmavati and her friends were playing with each other. Here the Jagatpita (the Father of the Universe) saw the Jaganmatha (Mother of the Universe); and the Holy Mother saw her future Lord. Lord Srinivasa then announced himself to his bride as follows: "My father is Vasudeva. My mother is Devaki. Balaram is my brother. Subhadra is my sister. Arjuna is my friend. The Pandavas are my relations. I was born on the Ashtami day in the Krishna Paksha; my bodily colour is Krishna (or dark). Hence I am called Krishna". Padmavati then replied to his queries with becoming shyness and dignity. "I am the daughter of Sri Akasa Raja. My name is Padmavati". Lord Srinivasa fell in love with the maiden and expressed his desire to wed her immediately, but he was forced to retreat and return home. He then declared his passion for the maiden Padmavati to Vakula Malika, his foster mother. The Lord also enlightened her about Padmavati's past birth as follows: "In Tretayuga, I was no other than Sri Rama, son of King Dasaratha. Along with Sita and Lakshmana, I then left for the forests of Dandaka. While we were away, Ravana attempted to carry away Sita! Listen

Oh! Vakula Malika! Agni Deva then came to the rescue of Sita. He confronted Ravana, and convinced him with sweet words that the real Sita was with him in Agniloka. Agni then managed to exchange and replace the real Sita by one Vedavati disguised as the real Sita. The real Sita was safely lodged with Svaha Devi, the consort of Agni The Maya Sita however was taken away to Lanka by the demon Ravana. This Maya Sita was no other than the Vedavati who had immolated herself in Agni, when Ravana attempted to molest her in her previous birth. Vedavati had then made a solemn oath and announced that she would be the cause of the destruction of Ravana and his tribe. After the destruction of Ravana, the real Sita was restored to Me during the Agnipariksha of the Maya Sita. The very compassionate Sita then prayed to me that I should wed the Maya Sita. I granted Sita's boon saying that it would be fulfiilled in Dwaparayuga when I would assume the form of Lord Srinivasa. The time for the fulfilment of that boon has come. Padmavati is no other than Vedavati of that Trethayuga". Vakula Malika who heard the story of Padmavati from the lips of Srinivasa was glad in her heart as she desired to see her Srinivasa as a Kalyana Murthi. She therefore promised Lord Srinivasa that she would proceed to Akasa Raja's city and fix up the holy marriage alliance.

Vakula Devi then quickly mounted a horse, crossed the river Suvarna Mukhi and reached the Holy Siva temple near sage Agastya's hermitage. Here she learnt from Akasa Raja's retinue that Padmavati had met a handsome young man in the royal pleasure gardens, that Padmavati loved the youth and fell unconscious after departure. Akasa Raja's Guru, Brihaspati, advised the King that Lord Siva should be propitiated by an abhishekam and they were therefore worship-

ping Lord Siva as commanded by the King. Vakula then announced herself as a Harisevika and requested that the friends of Padmavati should arrange an audience for her with Queen Dharunidevi. After the abhishekam, Vakula was taken to the city and admitted into the audience hall of Queen Dharunidevi. Meanwhile Srinivasa who was anxious regarding the outcome of his envoy, himself donned the robe of a Pulinda sooth-sayer, and proceeded to Narayanapuram. Srinivasa was then in the garb of a toothless hill-woman and had a big paunch, big ears and wore a necklace of shells. She had a seven month old baby tied to her back in her saree and a big bamboo basket of grain on her head. Sporting a stick in her hand, she entered the city of Narayanapuram and went on shouting that she would predict the future and protect husbands, sons and relations. This is beautifully described in the following slokas of the Bhavishyottara Puranam:

वेणुगुल्यं स्वशिरसि दधाना धन्यपूरितम् ।
लम्बोदरी लम्बकर्णलम्बतार्धपयोधरा ।।

अदन्त इष्कवदना तदाऽयूद्धर्मदेवता ।
ब्रह्माण नाभिसञ्जातं सप्रमासवयोयुतम् ।।

रुदन्तं रुष्कवदनं कृशाङ्गी दीर्घबाहुकम् ।
शिशुं बद्ध्वा चीरवस्त्रे नृत्यन्ती जदगदीश्वरी ।।

यष्टिं घृत्वा करे याऽगात् सबाला धर्मदेवता
नारायणपुरं प्राप्ता नारदाब्जजवन्दिता ।।

पुरीं समागत्य जगर्ज चेत्थं
पतीन् सुतान् बन्धुगणान् ददामि ।
श्रुत्वा वचुस्तद्रदितं पुराङ्गनाः
ऊचस्तदार्तां नृपवल्लभां प्रति ।।

The Pulinda woman then informed queen Dharunidevi as follows:—"Devi, Narayanaswamy is my husband. This baby is my son. I have come here to tell you everything

about the past, the present and the future". Dharunidevi then gave her the required presents along with scented betel leaves and nuts. The Pulinda woman with her baby on her lap then told the Queen in a sing-song voice as follows: "Yesterday a handsome young man dressed as a kiratha mounted on a horse was seen by your Padmavati; she is in love with Him and desires Him. She desires to wed the Lord of Tirumalai, Sri Srinivasa. Yesterday's hunter is no other than Srinivasa. It will be well for thee to give Padmavati in marriage to Srinivasa who is

'वैकुण्ठस्थो हरिः साक्षात् वर्तते वेङ्कटालये ।
'श्रीनिवास' इति ख्यातो विद्यावान् धनवान् बली ।।

If you fail to heed to my words, Padmavati will collapse within three days. In proof of what I say, an old woman will come within an hour to broach the subject of alliance between Padmavati and Srinivasa". The Pulinda woman then left taking leave from queen Dharunidevi. Padmavati then confirmed the story of her tryst with Srinivasa. As correctly predicted by the Pulinda woman, Vakuladevi herself approached Dharunidevi within the appointed time and asked for the hand of Padmavati for Srinivasa. Dharunidevi and Akasa Raja then counselled with each other and declared their approval of the proposed alliance. Akasa Raja then sent for Brihaspati and Suka Muni to fix up the Kalyana lagnam. Suka Muni advised Akasa Raja that they would all become blessed by making Kanyadanam to Lord Srinivasa. Brihaspati then examined the nadikutams and yonikutams of the future couple taking into consideration the birth-stars of Srinivasa and Padmavati (Sravanam and Mrigasirsha respectively). He declared happily that the planets were all auspicious and that the wedding between the two would be auspicious, and result in happiness for the couple and the world. Akasa Raja therefore sent a

Kalyana-patrika to Srinivasa through Suka Muni fixing the Kanyalagnam on Vaisakha Sukla Dasami (Thursday). Srinivasa then received the Kalyana-patrika and signified his consent to marry Padmavati. Vakuladevi also returned from Narayanapuram and declared the happy news of her embassy to Lord Srinivasa. Brahma, Siva, Kubera, Kasyapa, Bharadwaja, Vamadeva, Gautama, Viswamitra, Vasishta, Valmiki, Parasurama, Pulasthya, Dadhichi and other sages soon arrived on Venkatachalam to witness the marriage of the Lord of Tirumalai. The divine architect Viswakarma then built a glorious city on Venkatachalam. Indra along with Maya then proceeded to Narayanapuram and constructed a beautiful Kalyanamantapam there.

Srinivasa then said unto himself "I can never be happy without Ramaa Devi. Lakshmi has been with me even when I was a *Vatapatrasayi* on the ocean of milk". Lord Srinivasa then directed the Sun God to proceed to Karavirapuram and to invite the Lord's consort to Venkatachalam. The Sun God conveyed the Lord's message to her that the Lord had become an *Asakta* and was pining for Lakshmi. Lakshmi therefore in anxiety that her Lord was in danger rushed immediately to Venkatachalam. She worshipped her Lord and embraced him; the divine couple were thus united and Srinivasa really became Sri Srinivasa or Lord Srinivasa. Then Lord Srinivasa said to her "Oh! Sitadevi! Remember thy request made to me in the Rama Avatara period, when thou sought a boon from me that I should wed Vedavati, the Maya Sita. The time to fulfil that boon had come". Sri Lakshmi remembered her request in Treta-yuga and prayed to the Lord to marry Vedavati. Lord Srinivasa was then given a holy bath by Sri Lakshmi herself. He also worshipped the 'Sami' tree near the Kumara Dhara thirtham, obtained a loan from Kubera on the understanding

that his debt would be repaid within a thousand years and proceeded with all his divine retinue and paraphernalia to marry Sri Padmavati. Akasa Raja then presented a gold crown studded with gems and several other valuable ornaments to Lord Srinivasa. The marriage was then performed according to holy Vedic rites and Lord Srinivasa tied the *mangala-sutram* and Sri Padmavati became his consort. The celestials then rained flowers on the Holy Couple.

III

Several other Puranas also repeat many of the legends mentioned in the Varaha and Bhavishyottara Puranas. The Padma Puranam narrates the legend connected with the destruction of the demons Madhu and Kaitabha. These demons were extremely powerful and could not be overpowered by the celestials including Vishnu. The Lord therefore cleverly obtained a boon from them that they would both die in his hands. The demons then prayed to him that He should kill them on a spot where there was no water. Lord Vishnu then enlarged his thighs, seated the demons on his thigh and destroyed them, with his chakra. To this day, the Lord of Tirumalai is worshipped as Madhukaitabhari, that is, the destroyer of the demons Madhu and Kaitabha.

The Padma Puranam also mentions the story of Bhrigu insulting Lord Vishnu, Vishnu coming down to earth on Tirupati and his being discovered by King Tondaman.

According to the Brahmanda Puranam, the Lord of Tirumalai is Lord Krishna who fed himself with the milk from the breasts of Putana, a female demon and then destroyed her. He is worshipped in the 'Sri Venkateswara Sahasranamavali' as Vasudeva and as One who delights in eating Navanita or butter. He is the One who delivered the

celestials Nalakubara and Manigriva from the curse of the sage Narada. The legend connected with the above is narrated in the Brahma Vaivarta Purana. Other names of Vishnu such as Nandagopa Manohara, Brindaranya Nivasaka, Gopanganachelachoraya, Kaliyaphani darpagna, Rāsakridaparayana, Rukmini Nayanotsava, and the connected legends described in the Brahma Vaivarta Purana and the Bhagavata indicate to us that the Lord of Tirumalai is no other than Lord Krishna. Similarly, Vishnu names such as Kausalyatanaya, Dasakanta Sirodhvamsi, etc. in the Brahmanda Purana show that Lord Srinivasa is no other than Sri Rama. The connected legends are too well known to need repetition.

Shri J.H. Dave mentions a particularly interesting legend regarding the Swami Pushkarini from the Skanda. This legend is reproduced below:

"Skanda records this story of Dharmagupta, son of King Nanda. The latter in his old age adopted an ascetic life and left the kingdom to his son Dharmagupta. Once, this Dharmagupta while hunting spent some time in a forest at night. A lion pursued him; so the king climbed up a tree. A bear also resorted to the same tree out of the fear of the lion who was sitting below, waiting to catch the prey. The king and the bear agreed to remain awake in turn, each for half the night and permit the other to sleep. First, the king slept and the bear protected him, remaining wakeful. In spite of the lion's entreaties to drop the king, the bear remained faithful to its promise to the king. After midnight it was the king's turn to watch over the sleeping bear. On the lion's entreaties, the faithless king dropped down the bear as prey to the lion." The bear woke up, assumed the form of a yaksha and cursed the king to turn mad as the penalty for his heinous and criminal breach of trust. His retired father, Nanda, was informed of this. Ultimately, they

discovered the Swami Pushkarini lake and after a bath in it, it is said, Dharmagupta was cured of his madness.[1]

A pilgrimage to Venkatachala and a bath in Swami Pushkarini also cured sage Kasyapa of his evil. Even though he had remedies to cure king Parikshit of the serpent-bite of Takshaka, he did not go to cure him and on being bribed by Takshaka with jewels, he returned home from mid-way and Parikshit died of the serpent-bite. Any one who has remedies must cure the sick and the injured till the last moment.

The legendary accounts given above while not exhaustive give us only an idea of the glory of Sri Venkateswara of Venkatachala. Words or legends can never adequately describe the glory or grace of the Lord, which has to be experienced to be really enjoyed.

1. *Immortal India,* Vol. I. by J. H. Dave, published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, pp. 179 to 181.

CHAPTER IX

FESTIVALS, DAILY WORSHIP AND SOME PECULIAR CUSTOMS IN THE TEMPLE

It has already been indicated that Tirumalai or Vengadam was famous in the olden days for its festivals conducted on the hill. These festivals continue to this day, giving it fame, splendour and the enviable reputation that the temple has every day the radiant glory of 'Paccha Toranams and Nitya Kalyanams'.[1] Among the several festivals conducted on the hill, the Brahmotsavam is the most popular festival drawing huge crowds to the temple.

Brahmotsavam festival:—This festival bears the name of Brahmotsavam as the very first Utsavam for the Lord of Tirumalai in the temple is said to have been conducted by Brahma, the Lord of Creation (*Varaha Puranam*, Chapter 50). The Brahmotsavam is a festival which is conducted according to the Sastras.

Prior to 966 A.D. only one Brahmotsavam was conducted in Tirumalai. In 966 A.D. the Pallava Queen Samavai, who arranged for the installation of the Bhoga Srinivasa image in the temple, made arrangements for two Brahmotsavam festivals, one in the Purattasi month (on the day of the Chitra star) and another during the Mukkoti Dvadasi period. Thus, two Brahmotsavams came to be performed even in the 10th century. Other royal benefactors who worshipped the Lord in the temple were not slow in following the example set up by Samavai, and it is no wonder there was a proliferation of the Brahmotsavam festi-

1. (Telugu) Green Toranams or decorations made with mango leaves etc. for festive occasions. Nitya Kalyanam stands for auspiciousness and auspicious ceremonies conducted everyday —such as the Kalyana Utsavam of the Lord.

val in Tirumalai in the centuries that followed, as the following inscription[1] found on the north wall of the third prakara in Tirumalai temple will show:

"May there be prosperity, Hail! This is the silasasanam executed by the trustees of Tirumalai temple in favour of Rayasam Venkatadri, son of Viramaraju Timmayyar of Harita-gotra, Apastamba-sutra and Yajus-sakha on Wednesday, combined with the star Uttiram, being the 5th solar day of the bright fortnight of the Karkataka (Adi) month in the cyclic year Virodhikrit, corresponding to the Saka year 1473 while Sriman Maharajadhiraja Rajaparamesvara Sri Virapratapa Sri Vira Sadasivaraya Maharayar was ruling the kingdom, to wit,.....

and as we, (the trustees of Tirumalai temple) are authorised to collect the income from the above mentioned 2½ villages, your ubhaiyam (service) shall be conducted daily in Tirumalai temple:—

11 atirasa-padi to be offered to Alagappiranar on 11 days commencing from the day of ankurarpanam and ending with the day of Vidayarti festival during Avani-Brahmotsavam instituted by Tiruninra-ur-udaiyar (Tirumalai temple-accountants) in the temple of Sri Venkatesa at Tirumalai,

11 atirasa-padi to be presented on 11 days during Purattasi-Brahmotsavam instituted by Kadavan Perundevi, queen of Sundara Pandiyan in the name of Adi-Brahma (creator, Chaturmukha-Brahma),

11 atirasa-padi on 11 days during Arpasi-Brahmotsavam, instituted by Devaraya Maharayar,

11 atirasa-padi on 11 days during Kartikai-Brahmotsavam instituted by Bukkaraya Maharaya,

11 atirasa-padi on 11 days during Tai-Brahmotsavam

1. *T. T. D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. V. Inscriptions of Sadasivaraya's time, (662 T.T.) pp. 353 to 357.

instituted by Krishnaraya Maharayar,

11 atirasa-padi on 11 days of Masi-Brahmotsavam instituted by Ariyan (Harihararaya Maharaya),

11 atirasa-padi on 11 days of Panguni-Brahmotsavam instituted by Vira Narasinga-Yadavarayar,

11 atirasa-padi on 11 days of Chittirai-Brahmotsavam instituted by. ..Meludaiyar, one of accountants of ...

11 atirasa-padi on 11 days of Ani-Brahmotsavam instituted by Tallapakkam Tirumalai Ayyangar and

11 atirasa-padi on 11 days of another Ani-Brahmotsavam arranged by Ramaraja Chinna Timmaraja; altogether 110 atirasa-padi yearly to be presented to Sri Alagappiranar during these 110 days of 10 Brahmotsavams (Tirukkoditirunal) celebrated for Sri Venkatesa yearly at Tirumalai;

12 atirasa-padi on the 12 days of Masappirappu (first day of every solar month)

25 atirasa-padi on the 25 days of Ekadasi, occurring in every year,

25 atirasa-padi on the 25 days of Dvadasi, occurring in every year,

13 atirasa-padi on the 13 days of Paurnimai (full-moon-days), occurring in every year,

13 atirasa-padi on the 13 days of the star Sravanam (Tiruvonam), occurring in every year,

13 atirasa-padi on the 13 days of the star Mrigasirsham, occurring in every year,

12 atirasa-padi on the 12 days of. .. altogether 134 atirasa-padi to be offered on 134 days of Tingal-divasam (monthly festival days);

1 atirasa-padi on the day of Sri Jayanti festival,

1 atirasa-padi on the day of Uri-adi festival,

1 atirasa-padi on the day of Dipavali festival,

1 atirasa-padi on the day of Kartikai festival,

1 atirasa-padi on the day of Yugadi (Chandra-Samvatsaradi) festival (Telugu New Year's day) and

1 atirasa-padi on the day of Sri Rama Navami festival; altogether 6 atirasa-padi on the 6 days of these Visesha-divasam (special festival days);

thus making a total of 250 atirasa-padi to be presented along with 250 palams of chandanam, 1,200 areca-nuts, 25,000 betels and 250 pana-weight of refined camphor yearly on the 250 days of Tirukkodi-tirunal (Brahmotsavam), Tingal-divasam (monthly festival days) and Visesha-divasam (special festival days) celebrated in Tirumalai temple...."

The inscription is dated 8-7-1551, and gives a list of Brahmotsavams current in the temple at that time. It is obvious that there were at least eleven Brahmotsavams at that time. Besides the above, several other festivals such as Sri Jayanthi, Uri-adi, Dipavali, Yugadi (Telugu New Year's day), Sri Rama Navami etc. were conducted in the temple. The inscription clearly informs us that festivals including the Brahmotsavams, Tingaldivasam (monthly festivals) and Visesha-divasam (special festivals) took place for 250 days in a year.

At present, the temple conducts four Brahmotsavam festivals a year;[1] the first in the Purattasi month, the second on Ratha Saptami day, the third on Kausika Dvadasi day in Kartika month and the fourth on the Mukkoti Ekadasi day. The festivals usually take place for several days. The Utsavam during the Ratha Saptami period is considered to be an Arsha Utsavam, while the Utsavam during the Kausika Dvadasi period is considered as Rakshasa Utsavam. The

1. The author is grateful to Shri M.A.S. Kesavachari, T.T. Devasthanam Agama Pandit, for furnishing some particulars about the Brahmotsavams conducted at present in the temple. The author himself has first hand knowledge of the Garudotsavam, and other Utsavams.

most important of these Utsavams conducted at present is Brahmotsavam in the Purattasi month (September-October) which is an Utsavam performed by Manavas or men of the earth. This Utsavam commences on the day when the Sravana Nakshatram or star is prominent. On the day before the Sravana star day (thithi), Ankurarpanam is done by sowing 'navadhanya' seeds for germination in specially decorated new pots called 'Palikas'. This is supposed to form part of the propitiatory offerings to the Nityasuris or celestials in the temple. A 'Poorna Kumbham' is also installed in the yagasala.

The festival actually commences on the first day with the Dhvajarohanam—a ceremony in which the Lord's flag with the Garuda emblem is flown on a flag staff erected next to the Dhvajastambham. Everyday the Utsavam for the Lord is conducted with splendour, along with homas etc., as per rituals laid down. The Lord's Utsava Vigraham (with or without his consorts Sridevi and Bhudevi) is also taken in procession twice—once in the day time and again in the night time with the appropriate Vahanam. The Vahanams for the processions at night on the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth days are the Pedda Sesha, Hamsa, Simha, Punya Koti Vimanam, Garuda, Elephant, Chandra-Prabha, Aswa, Ivory Palanquin, and Tirucchi Vahanams, respectively.

The important festival days are the fifth, eighth and eleventh days. The morning procession of the Lord on the seventh day with Surya Prabha Vahanam is also worth seeing.

The Utsavam on the night of the fifth day is called the Garuda Seva or Garudotsavam. On this day the processional deity alone is taken in procession on the Garuda; the consorts of the Lord are not seated by his side on the Vahanam

as usual.[1] On this day, the Lord is given 'Uyyala Seva' in the evening.[2] This Uyyala Seva or 'Seva in the Swing' takes place in the open area near the Dhvajastambham. The processional deity comes out of the temple in a Tirucchi[3] and the poles of the Tirucchi are fixed to chains (fixed to the ceiling) with rings attached to them and the whole Tirucchi is swung to and fro during the Swing or Uyyala Seva. During this Asthanam or durbar, songs are sung and Vedic hymns etc. chanted.

The deity is then taken and installed on the Garuda vahanam. The Makarakanti ornament and the Lakshmi haram on the Mula-vigraham are then brought and used for the decoration of the Lord on the Garuda vahanam. The vahanam is then taken in procession around the east, west, north and south Mada streets of Tirumalai. The Lord has the usual paraphernalia during this procession such as Chatra, Chamara, Mangala Vadyas, recital of the holy books, etc.

The car festival takes place on the eighth day. This 'Rathotsavam' attracts the largest crowds during the Brahmotsavam festival days. The Utsavamurthi along with the consorts is brought on to the temple car early in the morning. The Lord in the temple car and the temple car are then gaily decorated; the temple chariot is then taken round the streets of Tirumalai.

On the eleventh day of the festival, the processional deity is taken on a Tirucchi Vahanam to the Swami Pushkarini. The Chakram of the Lord (also called Chakrattalvar) then gets a bath in the Swami Pushkarini. At the same

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. II, Inscription of Saluva Narasimha's time, pp. 27-30.
2. Uyyala seva for the Lord is performed on all the Brahmotsavam days in the evenings.
3. A sort of open palanquin.

time, the devotees of the Lord also plunge into the Swami Pushkarini. A bath at this time in the Swami Pushkarini is considered to be very holy and merit-giving. The Brahmotsavam comes to an end with this snana or bathing of the Lord in the Pushkarini.

Adhyayanotsavam:—The earliest reference in the temple inscriptions to the Adhyayanotsavam which is performed to this day in the temple was in the year 1400 A.D. It is an annual Vedic festival when the Vedas and the Tamil Prabandams are recited in the temple. This festival is conducted on Mukkoti Ekadasi day and is performed for about twenty days. The last day is Sattumurai day. Nammalvar's Tiruvaymoli along with the other hymns from Tamil Prabandam are recited during the Adhyayanotsavam.

In the olden days the festival commenced ten days before Vaikunta Ekadasi and continued for about twenty days. During this period the processional images were taken round the streets of Tirumalai when hymns from the Nalayira Prabandam of the Alwars were recited. In the olden days, one Adhyayanotsavam was also performed in front of Sri Ramanuja for twelve days in the month of Chittirai. This followed the arrangements for the daily recital of Veda made by Sri Devaraya Maharaya in 1430 A.D. The Kalyanamantapam was utilised at this time for housing the processional deity. The Utsava vigraham, Malayappan, is to this day kept in the Kalyana Mantapam during the Brahmotsavam and Adhyayanotsavam periods.

Pavitrotsavam:—A festival called the Pavitrotsavam was first instituted in the time of Saluva Narasimha. The relevant inscription regarding this festival is to be found on the north wall of the Vagappadi verandah in the first prakara

of Tirumalai temple and the relevant extracts from this are given below.[1]

"May there be prosperity! On Wednesday combined with (the star) Rohini, being the 10th lunar day of the bright fortnight of the Makara month in the Subhanu year, current with the Saka year 1385, the Sthanattar of Tirumalai executed the following silasasanam in favour of Sriman Mahamandalesvara Medinimisaraganda Kattari-saluva Mallayadeva Maharaja, son of Saluva Errakampayadeva Maharaja, viz., ...

and for the items of expenditure to be incurred in connection with the celebration of the *Tirupavitratirunal*, in your name, for five days in the bright fortnight of the Avani month, so as to commence with the ankurarpanam sowing the nine kinds of seeds in small earthen pots on the night of the dasami (tenth lunar day), to decorate the Tirumamanimantapam (the front mantapam adjoining the sanctum) on the Ekadasi day and then seat on the dvadasi day Malaikiniyaninra-Perumal and Nachchimar in the Tirumamanimantapam, after putting on the pavitram (sanctified thread round the head, neck, wrist etc.) and taking Him in procession through the streets, viz.,

103 panam for the somakumbham (water pot), pratimai (images) and yagnopavitam (sacred cord),

10 panam for the acharya's hasta matra and karna matra (ornaments for the hand and the ears),

12 panam for dakshina (gift of money), pasu (gift of a cow), kshetram (gift of land) and suvarnam (gift of gold),

40 panam for the panchasayanam (five articles of bedding) comprising the ratnakambali (carpet), mettai (bed),

1. *T. T. D. Epigraphical Series*, Vol. II, Inscriptions of Saluva Narasimha's time, pp. 27-30.

mayiliraku (peacock's feathers), krishnajinam (deer skin), and pattuchchelai (silk cloth),

5 panam for the Purana-bhattar and the Brahmans chanting the Vedas,

10 panam for the dakshina for the above individuals,

3¼ panam for the nila-varnam (dyer of the blue colour) for dying (and supplying) red, black and green thread making up the panchavarna-nul (thread of five colours),

½ panam for the yellow coloured thread,

7 panam for the kusavar (potters) for the supply of kumbhakuda (big pot), palikai and other earthen vessels,

8 panam for the achari (smith) to furnish the parvatam (plank with the image of the deity painted on it) and makara-toranam (ornamental arch-shaped wooden frame) with two crocodiles represented on it forming the doorway in the function,

the total coming to 198¾ panam."

This festival was revived in the temple some years ago. It is a purificatory festival and is conducted on the Sravana Suddha Dasami day. It takes place for four days.

The Vasanthotsavam:—The first Vasanthotsavam in Tirumalai was started by one Vilambi, son of a temple accountant. The ankurarpanam for this festival was done on the day of the Uttarabhadra star in the month of Palguni and the last day was on the day of Krithika star. The utsavam was celebrated for four days. Vasantham stands for spring and Vasanthotsavam is the spring festival. It is learnt that the Lord's silver chariot is used for this festival.

The Nityotsavam:—The Nityotsavam of the Lord is performed for forty days after Ugadi, the Telugu New Year's day.

Summer festival or Kodai Tirunal:—It was celebrated for a period of twenty days. This festival was being per-

formed during the administration of the Mahants. It is not being performed at present.

Anna Unjal Tirunal:—"Anna Unjal" stands for swan-shaped swing. This festival was first started by Saluva Narasimha and was conducted for seven days. Inscription 197 T.T. of the temple indicates that Saluva Narasimharaya instituted this festival and gives in detail the offerings made during the festival. It is obvious that this festival took place for five days. The festival started off by putting a pratima or an image into the Somakumbham or water pot while sowing the Navadhanyas. The processional image was then seated in the Unjal or Swing and various offerings were made to the Lord. The ankurarpanam was done on the sixth day of Sukla Paksha in the month of Chittirai. Homa, Punyaham etc. were done on the fifth day of the Utsavam. This festival is not being conducted in the temple at present.

Tiruppaliodam Tirunal or floating festival:—The inscription referred to above (197 T.T.)[1] by Saluva Narasimha also mentions about the first floating festival performed in the temple. The inscription is dated 15th June, 1473, and we may take it that the first floating festival was performed in this year.

The floating festival usually takes place in Tirumalai for five days. The first day, Lord Krishna of the temple in the Navanita Nritya pose is the presiding deity for the floating festival. The second day Sri Rama is the presiding deity while the presiding deities for the last three days are the Utsavamurthi of the Lord of Tirumalai and his consorts Sri Devi and Bhudevi. The presiding deities are gaily decorated and taken in procession on a 'Teppa' or boat floated in the Swami Pushkarini.

Kalyana Utsavam:—The Kalyana Utsavam is usually per-

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. II, pp. 89-98.

formed in the Kalyana Mantapam or the Tirumala Nayaka Mantapam. In this Utsavam the marriage of Sri Malayappan with his brides Sri Devi and Bhudevi is performed. This is an impressive ceremony and begins with the Panchamurthi Puja following the Vaikhanasa Agama rituals. The marriage is done with Mangala Sutra Dharana according to Vedic rites. The 'thalambralu' ceremony is also performed as in regular marriages. The Nachchiyars and the Lord are then garlanded.

This is purely an arjitham festival i.e. one which is conducted on payment of the scheduled fees. The donor is honoured at the end with a 'vastram' from the temple. All the devotees present at the temple are given a dakshina of one paisa along with the Lord's 'Akshintalu'.

Customs followed in the Tirumalai temple:—Before giving a brief description of the customs peculiar to the temple as well as a recital of the daily worship done in the temple it will be relevant and useful to state that the book *Sri Venkatachala Ithihasa Mala* mentions of certain rituals of worship finalised by Sri Ramanuja. These arrangements are given in the fourth stabaka of the *Ithihasa Mala*. They are as follows:—

(1) The face mark of the Lord's image should be made up of Pacchaikarpuram.

(2) The face mark of the Lord on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays should be made up of white earth.

(3) Katuka or collyrium should be applied to the eyes.

(4) The image should be dressed in flowers on Thursdays removing all the jewellery on the Lord.

(5) The flower dress should be removed on Fridays and the upright face mark on the Lord should be made with sacred earth. The image should be given a full abhishekam on this day.

(6) The Nachchiyar Prabandam should be sung in the temple on Fridays at the time of the removal of the Padmavati plaque for the abhishekam of the Lord.

(7) The Lord Varahamurthi at Tirumalai is to be worshipped first; the first Naivedyam should be to this deity and pilgrims should worship Him first before worshipping the Lord of Tirumalai.

(8) As the hill is holy, only those who have to serve the Lord should reside on the hill.

(9) Jivahimsa should not be allowed on the hill; those residing on the hill at the time of their death should be removed to the plains.

(10) Pilgrims should not wear sandals while proceeding to Tirumalai.

Several of the above customs said to have been initiated by Ramanuja, are to this day followed in the temple. A few however are not in vogue. Thus while it is true that the face mark of the Lord's image is made of Pacchaikarpuram to this day, it appears that white earth is not used for the Tirunamam on the days mentioned in (2) above. The Pacchaikarpuram namam is applied rather thickly over the eyes of the Lord and on the forehead of the Lord every Friday. This face mark is made thin on Thursday and is entirely removed before the weekly abhishekam or bath given to the Lord on Friday. After the Friday abhishekam, the face mark is again made with Pacchaikarpuram and not with sacred earth as listed out in (5) above. The other customs mentioned above are followed in the temple to this day.

A few other customs followed in the temple are as follows:—

(1) The worship in the temple is not according to the Vaishnavite Pancharatra Agama, but according to the Vaikhanasa Agama.

(2) The Lord's chin (Mula Vigraha) is daily exhibited with 1½ tolas of Pacchaikarpuram dabbed on it.

(3) The Lord of Tirumalai (Mula Vigraha) obtains 'Tirumanjanam' or abhishekam on every Friday morning. Turmeric paste is one of the articles used during this abhishekam for the Lakshmi figure, forming part of the Lord.

(4) The Bhoga Srinivasa or the Bhoga Murthi in the temple however is given a daily abhishekam.

(5) Civet oil is applied to the Lord's Vigraha obviously as a preservative.

(6) The Archana in the temple (Sahasra Archana and Ashtottara Archana) involves the repetition of the several Vishnu names which are listed out in the *Varaha Purana.*

(7) During the abhishekam on Friday the mantras recited follow the Purushasukta Vidhanam. The 'Mantrapushpa' slokas proclaiming that 'Sriman Narayana is the One and that worship to all deities reaches Him' are recited.

(8) After the abhishekam, along with the recital of the Prabandham, hymns from the *Taittiriya Upanishad* are chanted.

(9) The Lord's devotees usually offer their hair as a devotional offering to Lord Srinivasa. Devotees who pray to the Lord for his support, also pay 'mudupus' or offerings, according to pledges made by them. These offerings are deposited in the Lord's Hundi placed in the Tirumamani mantapam. These offerings form the main revenues of the temple. There is everyday a steady flow of gold, silver, currency notes, etc. into the Hundi and it can be said without exaggeration that the Tirumalai temple is the richest temple in the whole of India. This is obviously due to the steady revenues which flow into the temple Hundi every day from the Lord's devotees. There have been occasions when single devotees have themselves offered to the Lord

sums as much as a lakh of rupees. The sincere prayer of the devotee for the Lord's assistance has always been answered by the Lord in his infinite grace and sympathy and hence the steady flow of pilgrims to this temple to worship the Bhaktavatsala with the Varada Hastham.

According to tradition, the great monistic philosopher Sankara is said to have visited the temple and installed not only a Sri-chakram under the Lord's image but also a Dhana Ākarshana yantram—a yantram which attracts Dhana or riches. According to legend, the power or 'shakti' of the Lord is due to the above Sri-chakram and the steady flow of 'Dhana' or riches is due to the 'yantram' mentioned above.

(10) A unique ceremony called the 'waking up' ceremony or Suprabhatam is performed in the temple everyday; similarly the 'Ekantha Seva' is a ceremony in which the Lord is put to bed every night. These peculiar ceremonies obviously treat the Lord as a human being.

(11) The food offerings to the Lord are made outside the Kulasekharappadi. Only four *nali* of rice are said to be offered inside the Garba Griha to the Lord along with fruits, flower, milk, butter etc.

(12) The Chandramana Panchangam or the Lunar Almanac is followed in the temple.

Some of the more peculiar customs are discussed below briefly:—

Application of Pacchaikarpuram on the Lord's chin:— The Lord's chin wears an application of pacchaikarpuram always. This curious custom is explained by the following legend. Anantarya, one of the disciples of Sri Ramanuja, is said to have been ordained by his Guru Sri Ramanuja to maintain a nandanavanam or flower garden in Tirumalai to ensure a regular supply of flowers for the Lord of Tiru-

malai. He was keen on gardening as a service to the Lord, and was assisted in this work by his wife who was pregnant at that time. Once Anantarya was digging up the earth in his garden and was levelling the land; his pregnant wife was then assisting him by carrying the earth in a basket on her head. Due to her condition she soon got tired in her self-appointed task. Lord Srinivasa, the All-Seeing Deity, therefore assumed the form of a young Brahmachari and was assisting her by carrying the earth himself. Anantarya noticed the Brahmachari and thought it was rather presumptuous of him to interfere in their 'kainkaryam' to the Lord and struck him with the spade in his hand. The Brahmachari who was hit on his chin immediately vanished. Later Anantarya proceeded to the temple to worship Lord Srinivasa and found that blood was freely oozing from the Lord's image. He is said to have immediately realised that his helper was no other than the Lord Himself and quickly dressed the Lord's wound by applying pacchaikarpuram. The Lord is then said to have pardoned his devotee and said that he would wear the wound thenceforth in recognition of Anantarya's devotion.

Another legend connected with Anantarya is the presentation of a garland of flowers. It is said that once Lord Srinivasa and his consort Padmavati assumed the guise of a Prince and Princess and were sporting themselves in Anantarya's nandanavanam. Disturbed that his flowers were being collected and spoiled, Anantarya kept watch one night, discovered the couple in the garden and tried to capture them. Lord Srinivasa dodged him and disappeared, but his consort Padmavati was caught and tied to a champaka tree. The next day Anantarya discovered who his captive was and took her back to the temple with all honours.

Hearing this legend, Ramanuja is said to have ordained that the Lord of Tirumalai should be taken in procession on the seventh day of the Brahmotsavam round the town and that on the eighth day, Anantarya should be presented with a garland of flowers from the temple. This practice is being followed to this day.

The Tamil Prabandham:—The chanting of the Tamil Prabandham is another unique custom followed in the temple. The Tamil Prabandham as well as the Vedas are recited not only during the Adhyayanotsavam, but also at other times. Thus, for example, when Tirumanjanam or abhishekam is done to the Lord on Friday, the plaque on which the Padmavati figure is carved is removed and at this time the hymns composed by Andal Alwar which form a part of the Tamil Prabandham are recited by the priests. Sri Ramanuja appears to have initiated the practice of chanting the hymns of the Prabandham. The *Venkatachala Ithihasa Mala* mentions that Ramanuja arranged that the Adhyayana should be performed daily in the temple by first reciting the verses of Perialvar and later the hymns of other Alwars.

Tonsure ceremony in Tirumalai::—Another unique custom of Tirumalai is the Tonsure ceremony. Pilgrims to Tirumalai usually offer the hair on their head to the Lord as a devotional offering. Persons in need of the assistance of the Lord usually take a vow and when they visit the temple offer their hair at the Kalyanakatta special hall erected for this purpose. A bath in the Pushkarini follows the Tonsure ceremony; the pilgrims then enter the temple and worship the Lord.

The Tirumalai temple inscriptions mention about food offerings etc. made to the Lord, but no mention is made of this curious custom of offering of hair. The custom was perhaps introduced to stress the quality of humility as well as

renunciation of what is usually prized. It is also possible that this custom came into prominence when the Vaishnavas vigorously started their proselytising activities by setting up missions and by converting people from other sects and beliefs into the Vaishnava fold. Some fees are collected for the Tonsure ceremony and it is possible that the revenue aspect might have been one strong reason for the introduction of this custom in Tirumalai. Sri T. K. T. Veera Raghavacharya in his book *History of Tirupati* has reproduced in Appendix I, a reprint of an article published in August 1831 A.D. by an English District Collector of the region about Tirumalai in the *Asiatic Journal*. The reprint mentions that "offerings or *counickee* are made generally from interested motives, and are of every diversity of articles conceivable; gold and silver lumps, coins of all sorts, bags of rupees, copper, money, spices, asafoetida, *the hair cut off the head frequently vowed from infancy, and given up by some beautiful virgin in compliance with her parents' oath*". From the above it is evident that this custom at least existed in the year 1831 A.D. if not earlier.

Worship in the Temple:—The worship in the temple is strictly according to the Vaikhanasa Agama. According to the *Bhavishyottara Puranam*, Vaikhanasa Rishi is said to have admired the *leelas* of Lord Krishna in Dvaparayugam and done *tapas* to obtain darshan of the Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna then appeared to him and informed him that the sage should worship him as Lord Srinivasa only. He was also directed to proceed to Seshachalam and worship Lord Srinivasa who had manifested Himself there in an ant-hill. A Sudra by name Rangadasa would help him to locate the Lord in the hill. Vaikhanasa Rishi is then said to have proceeded to Tirumalai, obtained the services of one Rangadasa, located the Lord in the ant-hill

and started worshipping the Lord of Tirumalai. Thus Vaikhanasa Rishi was the first person to worship the Lord of Tirumalai; the temple is to this day worshipped therefore according to the Vaikhanasa practices only.

The routine of daily worship in the temple is now described below briefly.

1. **Suprabhatam:**—The day starts with the Suprabhatam or the wakening of the Lord. The Suprabhatam hymns are sung before the Bangaru Vakili. Immediately after this is over, the Bhoga Srinivasa who is in bed in the Sayana mantapam is shifted to the sanctum. Navanitha Harati is done to the Lord and a mixture of cow's milk, butter and sugar is offered to the Deity. The devotees who have chanted the hymns of Suprabhatam are then allowed to have the darshan of the Lord. This darshan is called the Suprabhata darshanam. Devotees are usually given as prasadam, the mixture of milk, butter and sugar offered to the Lord. The Visvarupaseva follows immediately when all pilgrims waiting outside the temple are allowed to have darshan of the Lord. The thirtham left in the thirtham vessels at night are also now distributed to the devotees. As mentioned earlier, the celestials are supposed to worship the Lord at night, and this thirtham is the thirtham of the puja performed by Brahma and other celestials.

2. **Thomalu Seva or the Bhagavathi Aradhana:**—Thomalu stands for flower garlands. In this Seva the Lord is richly decorated with flower garlands. This Seva follows the Visvarupaseva after *suddhi* (cleaning) is performed in the temple. The *suddhi* consists of removal of the previous night's decorations, etc. These flowers are thrown into the step-well constructed by Rangadasa in the Sampangi Pradakshinam.

During the Thomalu Seva water is offered to the Lord

for his daily ablutions. Abhishekam is done to the gold covers which cover the mula-vigraham as well as to Bhoga Srinivasa. The abhishekam of Bhoga Srinivasa is done while appropriate hymns are chanted. The Lord's image is then decorated with several flower garlands.

3. **Koluvu or Durbar:**—The Durbar of the Koluvu Srinivasa takes place in the morning when the previous day's revenue receipts are reported to him. The almanac is also read to the Lord.

4. **Sahasranama Archana:**—During the Sahasranama Archana, the names of Lord Vishnu are recited. This is an *arjitha* seva and only persons who have paid the required fees as in the case of Thomalu Seva are allowed inside.

5. **Naivedyam:**—The Sayana mantapam is cleaned and cooked food brought there as Naivedyam to the Lord. The Bangaru Vakili doors are then closed and the bells in the Tirumamani mantapam are rung. This is usually called 'the first bell' in the temple. Only the archakas are present in the sanctum at this time. Food is offered at this time to the Lord. Food offerings are also made to Vishvaksena, Garuda and the Nityasuris in the temple.

6. **Sathumurai:**—The Nalayira Prabandham is also read at this time when only Sri Vaishnavas are present in the temple. This applies during Naivedyam time also.

7. **Dharma Darshanam:**—Pilgrims are allowed free darshan of the Lord, at specified timings in the day. This is Dharma Darshanam.

8. **The Madhyanna Puja:**—The Madhyanna puja is the abbreviated form of worship of the Lord in the afternoon when the Lord's Ashtottaram or 108 names of Vishnu from the *Varaha Puranam* are repeated. This is an *Arjitha* Seva. A second naivedyam is offered at this time to the Lord.

9. **Ratri Puja:**—Puja is done at night also to the Lord; only Sri Vaishnava archakas are present at this time.

10. **Pavvalimpu Seva and Ardhajama Puja:**—Before the Lord is put to bed, the ardhajama puja is performed when sweets etc. are offered to the Lord.

11. **Ekantha Seva:**—Ekantha Seva is a Seva to which the public are allowed on payment. A velvet bed is spread on a Vuyyala or Swing and sweets, milk, fruits, etc. are offered to the Lord. At this time, songs are also sung. A descendant of Tallapakka poets also sings kirtans of the Tallapakka poet. Perfumed chandanam is placed on the chest of Bhoga Srinivasa as well as Alarmed Mangai on the Mula Vigraham. After the Ekantha Seva, the temple is closed.

Pulangi Seva:—There is a special puja called the Pulangi Seva on all Thursdays. During this puja, the Mula-murthi is clearly visible as most of the ornaments of the Lord are removed. Even the pacchaikarpuram marks on the eyes and forehead of the Lord are made thin during this Seva.

Abhishekam:—Tirumanjanam or abhishekam is made on the Mula Vigraham on Fridays. This is a function which takes about an hour and is accompanied by chanting of mantras, etc. The abhishekam is done to the Mula-murthi divested of all ornaments and clothes, except the Alarmel Mangai plaque. During the abhishekam, milk, sandal paste, turmeric, etc. are used. Honey is however not used for the abhishekam of the Mula Vigraham. After the bath, civet oil is applied to the Lord's body. Civet oil is also applied daily to the feet of the Lord.

Sripadarenu:—The pacchaikarpuram and kasturi along with civet oil collected from the Lord's body forms the Sripadarenu prized as a valuable prasadam of the Lord.

Special honours:—According to age-old custom and accepted by old *Amulnamas* the District Collector, Chittoor, the District Judge, Chittoor and the Tahsildar, Chandragiri, are given special honours in Lord Sri Venkateswara's temple. A mafi Harathi or a free Harathi is to be given to the Lord while they worship in the temple. It is presumed that these privileges can continue to be enjoyed by them during life even after their transfer or retirement.

Sahasra Ghata Abhishekam:—This is a unique abhishekam to the Lord when the Lord is given a bath with one thousand pots of water, to the accompaniment of mantras. This is a ritual which is an *arjitha* seva and is worth seeing by all devotees of the Lord.

CHAPTER X

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TEMPLE

We may now make a very brief survey of the administration of the temple. As can be imagined, the fortunes of the temple have more or less been influenced by the fast-flowing currents of Indian history at every stage—and more particularly by the history of South India.

Temple Administration up to 830 A.D.:—The temple was more or less a forest temple, perched on an inaccessible range of hills up to the eighth century A.D. We are therefore not in a position to say much regarding the temple administration up to this time. Even after this period the temple remained inaccessible, and it is a fact that the Tirumalai area was itself considered, for several centuries up to the 20th century, to be an Agency tract with a malarial climate unfit for anyone to settle down for life. The conditions in the early ages of history can therefore be easily imagined. This was perhaps the reason why a proxy image of the Lord of Tirumalai was kept and worshipped in the Tiruchikanoor temple in the plains as is seen from the following inscription,[1] which has been dated 830 A.D.

"Hail, Prosperity! In the 51st year of the reign of Ko-Vijaya-Dantivikramar, Ulagapperumanar of Solanur in Sola-nadu deposited 30 Kalanju (of gold) as the capital for a lamp (intended) for the image of Tiruvilankoyil Perumanadigal installed as representation of Tiruvenkatattu-Emperumanadigal (Sri Venkateswara). (We, the assembly of) Tiruchchoginur (Tiruchanur) (situated) in Kudavurnadu (comprised in the district) of Tiruvenkata-kottam, having

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, Early Inscriptions (T.G.) No. 219, p. 9.

purchased (a certain) Patti (of land) wih this capital, have caused the lamp to be set up".

The above inscription shows that a Tiruvilankoyil-Perumanadigal, a representation of Sri Venkateswara of Tirumalai, was installed at Tiruchanur and worshipped. This arrangement was perhaps made to assist pilgrims to worship the Lord, who were not in a position to undertake the arduous journey up the hill.

In these early ages, the temple must have been visited by the Lord's devotees in large numbers only on certain special occasions such as the Brahmotsavam festival. On other days the worship must have been conducted every day by a priest or a small body of priests living down in the plains.

The earliest inscription we have in the T.T. Devasthanam Epigraphical Series pertains to the year 830 A.D. (the one quoted above) and the administration of the temple before this period is only to be inferred from the literature of the period, from the Puranas, etc. It has already been mentioned that a certain legendary King by name Tondaiman discovered the Lord's image, and arranged for the worship of the Lord in addition to getting a temple constructed for Him.

The references to Vengadam Hill and to Lord Venkateswara in the Sangam literature, the Silappadikaram and the songs of Alwars have already been discussed elsewhere; these books do not enlighten us much about the administration of the temple. Worship of Vishnu—a Vedic Deity—was not unknown in this period. It is also conceivable that one of the important Divyapradesams of the Vaishnavas (there are 108 such Divyapradesams in India sacred to Vishnu) would be neglected by lack of proper worship. We would therefore be not wrong in assuming that the Lord in Tirumalai received worship everyday during the period indicated above.

Temple Administration during the Pallava period:—The earliest inscription available in T.T. Devasthanam Epigraphical Series (quoted above) is an inscription of the Pallavas. The Pallavas were the successors to the great Andhra Satavahanas as Rulers in South India. In the heyday of the Andhra Satavahanas, the Pallavas started as Governors of the southern areas of the great Andhra empire, and were subordinate to the Andhra Satavahanas. It is well known that the early Satavahanas were mentioned in the inscriptions of Asoka (about 274 B.C.) and had Paithan on the Godavari as their capital. The early Satavahanas were patrons of the Vedic religion. The later Satavahanas who continued reigning in India up to 200 A.D.—for about two centuries—possessed and ruled the whole of Deccan from the Arabian sea to the Bay of Bengal, Berar and Malwa, while their empire in the North extended up to the Vindhyas. Yagna Sri, one of the rulers in the later part of the second century A.D., inflicted defeat on Saka satraps and was even at home on the Indian ocean. His shipmarked coins indicate that there was extensive maritime commerce in his period. It was during Yagna Sri's reign that the first Pallava, Bappa Deva, became the Governor or Maharathi of the southern areas of the Andhra empire. When the power of the Andhras disappeared, the Pallavas with Kanchi as capital, asserted themselves and became in their turn masters of South India. The areas around Vengadam were under them up to the end of the 9th century, when the Cholas succeeded the Pallavas as the masters of South India.

The Pallava inscriptions of the temple throw some light on the temple administration of the period. An important inscription is that of the Pallava Queen Samavai, who consecrated the idol of Bhoga Srinivasa in the temple. This inscription has been quoted in Chapter III. This in-

scription which is dated 966 A.D. mentions the administrative machinery of the temple at Tirumalai. The relevant portion of the inscription reads: "....All the services, the managers of the temple (madapatyam) on Tiruvenkatam shall have conducted and the Sabhaiyar shall protect the land from being taxed..." From this, it is obvious that there were some Madapatyadars or managers in the temple and that the Sabhaiyar referred to is perhaps the village council of Tiruchchukanur, which appears to have had control over the affairs of the temple at this time.

Traditional accounts of the temple administration during Sri Ramanuja's time (1017-1137):—Sri Ramanuja is said to have been born in the year 1017 A.D. According to tradition he lived for about 120 years. While we are not sure about the dates, it is certain that he visited Tirumalai once or twice during the early years of the 12th century A.D. The work *Sri Venkatachala Ithihasa Mala* mentions of certain arrangements made by him for the Lord's worship in the temple; and these have already been catalogued in Chapter IX. Ramanuja ensured that his regulations were carried out by appointing an Ekangi (or bachelor) to look after the temple administration. It is said that the Ekangi was given the yellow robes of a Sanyasi along with the image of Sri Rama, a seal with the mark of Hanuman for sealing the Lord's treasury, and a lock and key to lock up the Lord's temple at night.

The devotees worshipping daily at the temple must have been limited at this time, and it is possible that this one Ekangi-administrator was able to cope with the temple administration.

Temple Administration under the Cholas:—The Cholas were the successors of the Pallavas in South India. Aditya I (880-907) became the first important Chola King

defeating the last Pallava ruler Aparajita. The founder of the Chola power was however Vijayalaya, (the father of Aditya) who was the first ruler of Tanjore. With the defeat of the last Pallava King, Tondaimandalam i.e. the areas around 'Vengadam' passed under the control of the Cholas. Aditya's son Parantaka (907-953 A.D.) defeated the Eastern Chalukyas, the Pandyas of Madura, invaded Ceylon and established the Chola Empire in South India. The greatest ruler of the Cholas is Raja Raja Chola I who ascended the throne in 985 A.D. and ruled for 29 years. He defeated the Cheras, the Pandyas, the eastern Chalukyas of Vengi and the Kings of Travancore and Orissa and became the Lord of the South Indian empire extending from Bengal to Ceylon. This King also attempted the annexation of the various islands in the Indian ocean to his empire. He assumed the title of Jayakonda Chola; and Tondaimandalam comprising of areas around Tirumalai, Kalahasti, etc. came to be called from then onwards as Jayakonda Chola Mandalam after him.

The temple administration during the Chola period was run by managers as in the times of Pallavas. Their work was however supervised and controlled by the officers of this King. It would also appear that the temple servants were called kaikkolas,[1] as in the case of the temple servants of Tiruchchukanur. The view that the control of the temple was firmly with the King's local officers can be inferred from the following inscription which is actually an Inscription—judgment[2] on the temple affairs of Tirumalai in those days passed by a Chola Adhikari or Provincial Governor.

"Hail, Prosperity! On the seventh day in the reign of

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* (222 G.T) Inscriptions pertaining to Tribhuvana Chakravarthigal Sri Raja Raja Devar—p. 55.
2. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, Early Inscriptions, Pages 30-31.

Sri Koppatrakesari-panmar alias Sri Rajendra Soladeva, while Adhikari (governor) Korramangalamudaiyan enquired into the affairs of the temple from his seat in the assembly-hall built by us in Tiruchchukanur, a *Devadanam* of this God, in Kudavur-nadu, (a subdivision) of Tiruvenkata-kottam, (a district comprised in the division) of Perumbanappadi (in the province) of Jayankonda-Solamandalam, having summoned Kadappankudaiyan, the Siritanattuppanimakan (subordinate administrative officer) who administered the Kudavur-nadu, and the servants of Tiruvenkatadevar, and called upon them to depose as to the condition of the permanent daily provision (existing) for Tiruvenkatadevar, they stated that, as per the old document registered on stone, the *Sabhaiyar* of Tirumundiyam, a grant to this god, received money and undertook to light 24 lamps, including one light of camphor, but that the villagers of Tirumundiyam discontinued to burn all of them excepting two lights which they still burn.

"Thereupon Adhikari Korramangalamudaiyan ordered that, with the 20 *Pon* being the sum available at Tiruchchukanur and the 3 *Pon* remaining in deposit in this deity's treasury (as remuneration) for the *Paricharakam* service rendered by them to this God, aggregating to 23 *Pon,* (the ghee) might be well-packed and transported to Tirumala along with the articles of daily provision, and the servants working in this behalf might be enabled to burn (the lights) without any impediment.

"Towards this charity of the *Nandavilakku,* therefore, to be maintained by the Sabhaiyar of Tirumundiyam, the Srivaishnavas ordered that the 23 *Pon* belonging to them shall be credited to the capital fund of this God's treasury, (the ghee) shall be transported to this God's treasury (storehouse) at Tirumala and the managers of the temple and the

servants of Tiruvenkatadevar alone shall burn the lights, including the *Nandavilakku* and one *Karpura Vilakku,* as long as the moon and the sun last".

The above inscription clearly shows that the provincial governor or Adhikari by name Korramangalamudaiyan sat in judgment over the affairs of the Tirumalai temple. The Siritanattuppanimakan—the local district officer by name Kadappankudaiyan as well as the temple servants were enquired by him about an alleged misuse or non-use of funds placed at the disposal of the Sabhaiyar of Tirumundiyam for lighting 24 lamps to the Lord of Tirumalai; the Adhikari after hearing the evidence of all parties made the Sabhaiyar pay into the Lord's treasury a fine of 23 Pon and insisted that the managers of the temple and the servants of the Tiruvenkatadevar alone should thenceforth burn the lights (nandavilakku) for the God at Tirumalai. We can infer from the above that the temple administration at that time consisted of the temple servants and a manager, and that the Sabhaiyar or Village councillors of Tirumundiyam village had been made trustees to burn lights in the temple. The treasury of the temple was also called the Sri Bhandaram[1] in those days.

Another inscription of Tribhuvana Chakravarthigal Sri Raja Raja Devar (1216-1254)[2] informs us that the famous Thippaladhisvaramudaiya Mahadevar temple at Tiruchanur had a Sthanattar (a local temple council) and that this Sthanattar was functioning as the Trustee for the temple. This inscription shows that the system of Sthanattars existed under the Cholas in Tiruchanur in 1216 A.D; it is therefore possible that this system existed in Tirumalai

1. *T. T. D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, Inscription No. 112 T.T. found on the southern wall of the Mukkoti Pradakshinam in Tirumalai temple, pp. 44.
2. Inscription No. 384 G.T. *T. T. D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, Early Inscriptions (dated 1215) pp. 59-60.

also. There is an inscription[1] of Tirukkalattidevan Yadavaraya which confirms this view that the sthanattars existed at Tirumalai in the early 13th century; it reads as follows:—

"Hail! Prosperity! (This is) the arrangement ordered (settled) for the temple of Tiruvenkatamudaiyan, on the request of the Sthanattar of Tirumala,

"by me, Tirukkalattidevan, entitled the sole shelter of the terrestrial globe, the proud cuckoo of the royal park of all learning, the honey-bee (sucking) at the lotus-feet of (God) Srikalahastisa, the ruler of the prosperous Venkagiripura (the city of huntsmen), the chief of huntsmen, the overlord of Vengi, the recipient of the excellent grace obtained from Pitharadevi (Pidaridevi), the master of the Godavari, the lord of Kanupaka the best city, the best among the learned men, the sporter in Gopakarapura, the retreat of the defeated kings, the ornament of the Lunar race, Chalukya-Narayana, the abode of all (virtuous) qualities, Maharajadhiraja, Yadavaraja and Srimadbhujabala.....all the *Nanjai* (wet) and the *Punjai* (dry) lands comprised within the four boundaries of Kudavur, together with all taxes including Kadamai-ayam, Padikaval, Vettichcharikai....Kolvari and Pattampon; and Ponvari and Kanikkai; and Porkalangal including Kanikkai.

"Having accordingly granted with libations of water (for) the *Nimandam,* we have directed that Sudarsana stones (marked with the Vishnu-Chakram) be planted along the boundaries on the four sides. This (order) shall be executed".

The above inscription shows that the Sthanattars of Tirumalai made a request to Tirukkalattidevan Yadavaraya to make adequate provision for the Lord's worship in the temple and that the King then made suitable arrangements. This

1. *T. T. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, Early Inscriptions, pp. 114-115.

Yadavaraya was a Chola vassal ruling the Tondaimandalam in the early years of the 13th century.

Sthanattars:—*Composition and functions of the Sthanattars:*—The Sthanattar was a local temple committee, which was primarily charged with the duty of running the temple on efficient lines. It was a secular body, though some of the members of the body unavoidably performed religious functions also in the temple. It was an august body which acted as the executive for the local rulers in temple matters; it also acted on its own (more particularly in the later period under Vijayanagar Kings) as the trustee for the temple, receiving endowments and ensuring that the services for which the endowments were made were properly carried out.

It is however to be remembered that the Sthanattars were under the direct control of the local rulers though they functioned with some measure of independence in several cases. The local rulers issued edicts such as the one quoted below[1] and these had to be perforce obeyed by the Sthanattars.

"On a certain day in the month of Panguni in the 12th year of the reign of Tribhuvana Chakravartigal Sri Tiruvenkatanatha Yadavarayar, intimation (is hereby given) to the Sthanattar of Tirumala, in pursuance of the royal edict converting as *Sarvamanya* (the village of) Tirupati (previously) granted to (God) Tiruvenkatamudaiyan as *Tiruvidaiyattam-Tirunamattukkani.*

"The (following) taxes which we are accustomed to collect (from the said village are hereby remitted) from the month of Chittirai in the 12th year, (and ordered to be utilised) for the articles of *Amuduppadi* and *Sattuppadi,* during the *Narayanan-Sandhi,* thus converting the said village (of

1. *T. T. D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, Early Inscriptions, pp. 129-130.

Tirupati) into a *Sarvamanya,* so as to last as long as the moon and the sun last. This *Tiruvaradhanam* (propitiatory service) shall proceed from this day onwards without break or diminution. (This edict shall be) engraved on stone and copper.

"The following are the taxes remitted:

Pandivari, Palavari, Kanikkai, Vendukolvari, Malaiamanji, Kudiraivari, Kanakkamovai, Nattuvari, Nilaikkanikkai, Nattarvaitte-kanikkai, Valinadai-kanikkai, Akkankanikkai, Kartikai-Kanikkai, Pattivari, Viruttuvakai Palatalikku-madaiyil-kollum-(vari), Nattar-madaiyil-bagukkumvari, Vallaladevar-vari, Vasal-panam, Talai-Talaipanam, Nischayippu, Mukamparvai, Padiyarimovai, Mukamparvaichchammadam, Sambadachchammadam, Settikal, Vanikar, Senai-angadiyar, Sekkukudimakkal, Kaikkolar-per, Sungavari-kollumvagai, Sunga-ennai, Pillaikal-kanikkai."

The above inscription is an edict issued by Tiruvenkatanatha Yadavarayar (1322-1337), a local ruler of Tondaimandalam, converting the village of Tirupati as a Sarvamanya village and arranging food offerings to the Lord (Narayanan-Sandhi). The Sthanattar of Tirumalai was informed about the arrangements made for compliance of all directions given. It is interesting to note that several local taxes were remitted in the village of Tirupati. The various kinds of taxes indicated in the inscription are gold taxes, grain taxes, taxes on free service, tools on animals, poll-tax, profession tax on merchants, oilmongers, weavers, licences for planting gardens, fishing ponds, poundage on stray cattle, etc[1].

Temple Administration under the Telugu Pallavas and Pandyas:—The temple has a few inscriptions of the Pandya King Jathavarma Sundara Pandya I (1251-1275) of Madura. It is this king that acquired merit by fixing a gold kalasam on the temple at Tirumalai during his reign. The Chola

1. *T.T.D. Epigraphical Report,* pp. 122-123.

King Rajendra III was vanquished in battle by this Pandya. His inscriptions do not throw any light on the temple affairs of this period. However there are several inscriptions of the Telugu Pallava, Vijaya-Gandagopala of Nellore (1250-1282 A.D.). One of the inscriptions[1] dated 1254 A.D. mentions of the 'Kaikkolai' or temple servants of Tirumalai receiving gold in the Sri Bhandaram, and undertaking to provide certain services to the Lord. Another inscription[2] mentions of the famous Gandagopala-madai (the gold madais of the Telugu Pallava Gandagopala current in the whole of South India) paid into the Sri Bhandaram.

Temple Administration under the Vijayanagar Kings:— The system of Sthanattars settled down during this period. Temple accountants called Tiruninra-ur-udaiyar also made their appearance having powers to maintain accounts. This is a sure sign that this temple became very prosperous during this period, needing the assistance of accountants for the maintenance of temple accounts. The temple accountant actually first makes his appearance in the year 1380 A.D.

Another important inscription enabling us to infer the composition of the Sthanattar of Tirumalai, is extracted below:[3]

"Hail! On the 11th day of the Margali month in the Pramoduta year, current with the auspicious Saka year 1312, this is the *Silasasanam* executed by us, the Sthanattar of Tirumala, in favour of Mullai-Tiruvenkata-Jiyar, the manager of the *Arisanalaiyan-Tirunandavanam* (flower-garden) at Tirumala: ..... Of the prasadam offered (to God) at Tirumala, the 26 *Nali* and 3 *Ulakku* coming to your share shall be distributed as follows:— deducting 15 *Nali* and 3 *Ulakku* as the portion (sesham) for the

1. *T. T. D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, pp. 91-92. (127 G.T).
2. *T. T. D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, pp. 98.
3. *T. T. D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. I, pp. 175-176.

Arisanalaiyan-Matham, (the balance of) 11 *Nali* being the *Prasadam* granted by you to the Sthanattar, the Sthanattar shall thus partake of it, as 4 *Nirvaham* for the Tirupati Srivaishnavas, 3 *Nirvaham* for the Sabhaiyar of Tiruchchukanur, 1 *Nirvaham* for the Nambimar, 2 *Nirvaham* for the Koyil-kelkum-Jiyars, and 2 *Nirvaham* for the Koyil-kanakku Tiruninra-ur-udaiyars".

The above inscription shows that the prasadam was shared between the Srivaishnavas, Tiruchchukanur Sabhaiyar, Nambimar (temple priests), Koyil-kelkum-Jiyars and the two temple accountants. The prasadam was divided into twelve parts and then distributed; we could perhaps infer from the above that the Sthanattar consisted of ten members, not taking into account the two temple accountants. The Srivaishnavas referred to are obviously the 'Ekaki Srivaishnavas' of Ramanuja. It was only one during Ramanuja's time; and this number increased to four—within three centuries. These Vaishnavas were obviously performing religious functions such as worship in the temple in addition to their managerial duties.

Temple Administration during the troubled period of the seventeenth century A.D.:—The last inscription of the Vijayanagar Kings available to us is in the year 1665 A.D.[1] The last emperor was Sri Ranga III (1642-72). His predecessor Venkata II had in the year 1639 confirmed the grant of the site of the Fort St. George to the East India Company made by one Damarla Venkata, the Nayak belonging to the region of Pulicat and St. Thomas. Madras or Chennapatnam was actually named after Chenna, the father of Damarla Venkata. Sri Ranga III renewed the above concessions to the East India Company. He was respected by the English

1. From Sri T.K.T. Veera Raghavacharya's *History of Tirupati,* Vol. II, Footnote, p. 864.

and the Jesuits in the country as a wise man. He however lost his kingdom. Perhaps his ambition to fight too many foes at one time was one of the causes of his failure. The Nawabs of Golkonda and Bijapur succeeded in acquiring his territories and Mir Jumla, who became the Viceroy of Bengal and the Prime Minister of Golkonda, and the Prime Minister to Aurangzeb later obtained Tondaimandalam as one of the spoils. From him, it passed to the Nawab of Arcot. This was again the period when the great Shivaji shook the Moghul Empire to its foundations. Not much is known at present about the temple administration of this period. It is however worthy of note that the Muslims as well as the Mahrattas who were in possession of the Carnatic at various times during the troubled period did not interfere with the worship of the temple, realising rather shrewdly that the temple was a very good milch-cow which would yield them much revenue every year. During this period, the temple was also visited by Akkanna and Madhanna, the Ministers of the Nawab of Golkonda.

Temple Administration under the East India Company:— After the death of Aurangzeb, in 1707, the Moghul empire collapsed in India and it was a period of unrest as far as South India was concerned. The kingdoms of Golkonda and Bijapur also disappeared, and the Mahrattas were waxing strong during this period. The British and the French were also poised against one another, each trying to establish supremacy in the country over the other. The role of the English under Sir Robert Clive, the struggle of the French under Duplex and Bussy, to establish a foothold in South India, the Carnatic wars in which the Nawab of Carnatic was a helpless pawn, is history which is too well known to require repetition here.

During the early years of this period, the mother of

Bajirao and Bajirao's wife are said to have worshipped the Lord of Tirumalai at Tirupati.

Robert Clive himself was not above utilising the revenues of the temple during this period to further the interests of the East India Company. The Nawab of Arcot had appointed a rentier in Tirumalai and leased out the revenue of the temple. The revenues of the temple were assigned to the English, and it is said that the English obtained about 3 lakhs rupees in the years 1753-58 from the temple. The French also who with watering mouths looked envious and desired to appropriate the revenues of the temple, once successfully occupied Tirupati in 1758; the reason was to strengthen themselves with the revenues of the temple. The star of the East India Company was however in the ascendant and the French were completely rooted out of the country. The Company was thus left as the sole enjoyer of the revenues of the temple. In the year 1801 during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Wellesley, some correspondence said to incriminate the Nawab of Carnatic was trumped up by the East India Company and summary action speedily taken to annex the Carnatic. The Nawab of Carnatic was quietly pensioned off, and thus the temple directly came under the administration of the East India Company.

The temple lands were resumed immediately by the Company, and the staff in the temple were paid out of the Company's funds while the entire revenues of the temple were appropriated to the Company's coffers. An article published by a District Collector of Tirupati area in the *Asiatic Journal* quoted by Sri T.K.T. Veera Raghavacharya in his book *History of Tirupati* mentions about the temple administration under the East India Company. The relevant extracts are reproduced below, and show the rapacity with which the Company robbed the temple of its revenues:

"The whole of the revenue of the temple, from whatever source derived, are under the management of and appropriated by the circar or government. A regular establishment is entertained paid by salaries; and a horde of brahmins are maintained by lands, appropriated for that purpose, over the face of the surrounding country, called manniyams or estates enjoyed on very favourable terms under government, subject only to a slight jody or tax. The temple is kept up in all its dignity; and the average receipts on the account of government, for the last ten years, or fuslies, will show what a good thing we make of it. The head general officer there is called Tahsildar, whose business is the general superintendence over the others; to see the pilgrims are well treated and lodged in proper places; supplies kept fairly in the bazaars, ceremonies duly performed as paid for, and that no bribery, tyranny or oppression of any sort takes place. He reports to the Collector or his assistants, according to orders, on all cases of doubt or importance. Next is the Sheristadar or head native accountant, who acts under the Tahsildar, assists him in all his responsible duties, and superintends the regularly kept accounts of all disbursements and receipts for the use of the temple. Under him are four gumastas or native writers. The rysagu is a police clerk and is assisted by a ghola and obeys the Tahsildar in all magisterial matters. Common servants are allowed for taking care of dufters, or records, lighting, sweeping the cutchery, etc. and twenty peons attend the Tahsildar's cutchery and are paid a pagoda (8 shillings) a month; with the duffedars or head peons with larger salary. During the Brahmotsavam or nine days festival an additional sibbandi is allowed with twenty-five peons, twenty putwars (and that kind of peon in lower salaries) and five hircurraks or scouts to bring intelligence of the arrival of any pilgrim of rank, and to keep the peace among the

enormous crowd that annually fills this part of the country. They also assist the Tahsildar with forty or fifty peons, a party of whom are constantly on the hills looking out for the thieves who congregate where the prey may be, whilst another party range the country, assisted by the village police, who apprehend suspicious characters. A company also of sepoys under a native officer are stationed as the Tahsildar may choose as permanent guards. The temple has attached to it a granary and store house under charge of Jeengar and Ekangi or his deputy. These have under them a gumasta, an allowagar or grain measurer, three peons, a sandal-wood carrier, a flower carrier, a musk extractor, a pottu, a wood-man for the cook, a golla, a sweeper, a mossoli or man to light up the place. The Tahsildar always sees that the store has a sufficient stock for any sum upon it. He keeps regular accounts of all that enters the granary. The Jeengar keeps account of all that is disbursed upon the orders of the Parapatyadar or manager of the temple. The Parapatyadar or manager supplies daily ration of food to all the numerous servants of the temple, sees that they all do their several duties and is second only to the Tahsildar in general superintendence. He takes care that the gifts presented are duly disposed of, searches the guards and others over the place for receiving the offerings and with the result of the day's oblations accompanies them to the Tahsildar who with him seals up in gunny bags whatever is collected in money, jewels and copper plates, etc. Attached to this officer is a gumasta, allowagar and four peons, and he keeps another account of all he receives from the stores. The offerings of foods, sweets, etc., presented by the pilgrims are prepared for them by his orders and his accounts are counter-examined by the Tahsildar. The Parapatyadar, previous to drawing in any

large quantity on the store, sends the estimate to the Tahsildar who signs it.

Passing through the Bangaru Vakili or silver porch the pilgrims are admitted into a rather confined part and are introduced to the God in front of whom are two vessels, one called the gangalam or vase, the other Kopra or large cup and into these things votaries drop their respective offerings and making their obeisance, pass out through another door. At the close of the day the guards both of peons and sepoys round these vessels are searched. Without examination of any sort, offerings are thrown into bags and are sealed first with the seal of the pagoda, then by the Tahsildar and Jeengar; after which the bag is sent down to the cutchery below the hill—Govindarazu pettai. At the end of the month, these bags are transmitted to our cutchery here or huzur (meaning the presence); and they are there opened, sorted, valued and finally sold at auction. However, during the Brahmotsavam either the Collector or a subordinate must be on the spot owing to the value of the offerings, and to see that no cheating takes place for want of power of immediate representation. And on this duty I was bound when I wrote from Chandragiri. I have little more to add except the average revenue of the last ten years. The annual net proceeds from this source is about eighty-seven thousand rupees. In 1822, collections were one lakh forty-two thousand and odd but this is exclusive of expenses, wherewith twenty thousand may be deducted. In 1820 or fasli 1230, the collections were 1,02,000."

A pilgrimage to Tirupati in the year 1830:—Enugu Veera Swami's Journal gives a vivid account of a pilgrimage to Tirupati in the year 1830.[1] The author who made a tour

1. Enugu Veeraswami's Journal by Pidatala Sitapati (under publication in the Oriental Manuscripts Research Institute, Directorate of State Archives, Hyderabad).

of the country in this year stayed at Tirupati for several days and some of his observations on Tirupati given below are worth noting. "The shrines of Lord Govindarajaswami and Lord Kodanda Ramaswami are located at Diguva Tirupati. The shrine of Lord Kodanda Ramaswami does not get any grant or help from the government. The shrine of Lord Govindaraja is with *acharyapurushas*, under the general control of the government. The Vedas are being taught here in a school. Sadavarthi is being given here to Gosains and others, thanks to the benefactions of Chandulal and two other pious souls. There are two or three Ramanujakutams also here and Srivaishnavas are given free prasad here daily. This is a big place and a township. All articles are available in the market here. Artisans and workmen with various kinds of skills live here. The waters of Narasimha theertham only are potable. Kapila theertham is located at a distance of two Ghadiyas from Tirupati and is an enchanting place. There is a perennial waterfall here and this water is ponded at the bottom of the hill; the theertham itself is enclosed in a spacious mantapam. This mantapam is very suitable for giving feasts to brahmins. The benefactions of Chandulal in the sacred places around this region are to be particularly mentioned.

"In view of the cold, I stayed on the hills during the day time one day only. The distance between Diguva Tirupati and Tirumalai where the Lord's temple is located is 24 amadas. The ascent upto the Galigopuram along with the descent from Galigopuram is rather arduous. There is level land thereafter on the pilgrim's walk to the hills. The ascents and descents in the pilgrim's walk on the rest of the way however are not as difficult as on the climbs at Galigopuram. There are drinking water facilities and several mantapas on the way. A *bairagi* stationed near the Galigo-

puram is supplying free butter-milk to pilgrims. An idol of Sri Rama is being worshipped here by the *bairagi* at the Galigopuram. *The East India Company is obtaining a lakh of rupees as revenue at the Tirupati temple by way of offerings made to the Lord.* Every proceeding and rite on the hill entails the payment of suitable fees to the government here. While the Lord thus is bestowing his blessings on his devotees cleansing away their sins, they are also out of pocket due to the system of collection of various fees here! Lord Srinivasamurti who has manifested Himself here is a Divyamangalamurti. This Lord, it appears, has been worshipped from ancient times by celestial and great personages. There is a Mahant's Matham here built very spaciously—which is the headquarters of *Gosains* and *bairagis*. This Mahant has disciples in large numbers all over the country. The houses on the hill are congested and small. The cold wind blows here during the period between Chaitram and Jyestham. This cold wind is injurious to the health of the inhabitants on the hill. There is also much nuisance due to monkeys here. Boars also move rather freely among the people on the hills. During the cold-wind season, men do not stay on the hills in large numbers. Paying a fee of Rs. 220 *Aratirupavada* worship was performed by me, with offerings of Prasad to the Lord."

Veeraswami's account shows that the East India Company was appropriating to itself a lakh of rupees every year from this temple. The system of collection of fees, it appears, was as unpleasant to Veeraswami in 1830 as it is now to many of us. The cold winds are still there now at Tirumalai, but thanks to the developmental measures undertaken after Independence by the Andhra Pradesh Government, the hazards to health have vanished. The nuisance due to monkeys and pigs still continues!

The management of the temple was in accordance with the Madras Regulation VII of 1817. This was a regulation for the appropriation of rents and produce of lands granted for supporting mosques, temples, etc. and for the custody of escheats. This regulation empowered the Board of Revenue to superintend the endowments and ensure that the revenue from the original endowments were put to proper use. The District Collector working under the Board of Revenue became the authority for such superintendence. Under section 8 of the above regulation, the District Collector became the ex-officio agent of the State Government for the above purpose.

The administration of the Tirupati temple during the Company's time was according to a set of rules called the Bruce's Code.

This state of affairs continued till the year 1841 when the Board of Directors of the East India Company decided that the Company should not interfere in the affairs of the temples in India. The T. T. Devasthanam was consequently transferred by a sanad to the Head of the Hathiramji Mutt at Tirupati.

Temple Administration under the Mahants of the Hathiramji Mutt:—During the management of the temple by the Mahants, the Swami Pushkarini as well as the Markandeya, Agni, Yama, Vasishta, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera and Galava thirthams were renovated.[1] The other inscriptions in Volume VI of the T. T. Devasthanams Inscriptions show that the Kapila thirtham as well as the surrounding mantapams were renovated during the time of the Vicharanakarthas. Sri Mahant Sevadasji is also said to have constructed the outer Gopuram of the temple at Tirumalai called the Padikkavali Gopuram along with certain other

1. *T. T. D. Epigraphical Series,* Vol. VI, (350 T.T.), pp. 219-220.

mantapams. This was in the year 1878 A.D. Obviously the mention is regarding his renovation of the outer Gopuram. Inscription No. 242 in the same Volume also informs us that one Ramalakshmanadasa fixed a gold kalasam on the Vimanam of the temple in the year 1908.

"Two rest houses were (also) constructed at Tirupati and 14 sheds put up at Tirumalai, besides fifteen quarters in the thousand-pillared mantapam in Tirumalai. Sanitary conveniences were (also) provided and the pathway made safer by the installation of electric lights throughout the route in 1929,"[1] under the Mahants.

From the Ananda Nilaya Vimanam Bulletin quoted above, it is also learnt that several suits were filed against the Mahants for rectifying 'certain alleged abuses' and that the District Court, Chittoor, settled a scheme which was later amended by the Privy Council in appeal. Soon afterwards, the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act 1927 was enacted and the scheme of the Privy Council was deemed as the scheme framed under the above Act. In practice this scheme finalised by the Privy Council also appears to have worked rather unsatisfactorily. The T.T.D. Act of 1932 was therefore passed to improve the administration of the Devasthanam. This Act vested the administration of the T.T.D. in a Committee of seven members. A Commissioner was also appointed to supervise the affairs of the temple by the Madras Government under this Act. This Act of 1932 was superseded by the Madras Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act of the year 1951.

Temple Administration under the T.T.D. Act, 1932 and the Madras Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act:—Sections 80 and 85 of the Madras Hindu Religious

1. T. T. D. Bulletin—Ananda Nilaya Vimanam Samprokshanam Special Supplement dated 26-8-1958.

and Charitable Endowments Act, 1951, deal exclusively with the administration of the T.T. Devasthanams. Section 80 envisages the appointment of a Board of Trustees for the Devasthanams consisting of five members appointed by the State Government. The members are to hold office for a term of five years. The Act also provides for the appointment of an Executive Officer who "(1) shall have power to manage the properties and affairs of the Devasthanams; (2) shall be responsible for the proper custody of all the records and of all the jewels, valuables, moneys, funds and other properties of the Devasthanams; (3) shall arrange for the proper collection of the income and for the incurring of expenditure; and (4) may, in cases of emergency, direct the execution of any work or the doing of any act which is not provided for in the budget for the year and the immediate execution or the doing of which is, in his opinion, necessary for the preservation of the properties of the Devasthanams or for the service or safety of the pilgrims resorting thereto; and may direct that the expenses of executing such work or the doing of such act shall be paid from the funds of the Devasthanams. The executive officer shall report forthwith to the Board of Trustees any action taken by him under clause (4) and the reasons therefor."

Under the Act, the Commissioner, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments, has certain powers, such as deciding disputes, appropriation of Endowments, etc.

Section 85 lays down the purposes for which the Devasthanam's funds may be used and is reproduced below: "The funds of the Devasthanams may be utilised for any purpose permitted by any other provision of this Act and also for all or any of the following purposes:—

(*i*) the maintenance, management and administration of the Devasthanams;

(*ii*) the maintenance of the educational institutions referred to in Schedule III;

(*iii*) the foundation and maintenance of hospitals and dispensaries for the relief of the pilgrims and worshippers visiting the temples;

(*iv*) the construction and maintenance of choultries and rest-houses for the use and accommodation of all classes of pilgrims;

(*v*) the provision of water-supply and other sanitary arrangements to the pilgrims;

(*vi*) the establishment and maintenance of a veterinary hospital for the animals of the Devasthanams;

(*vii*) the acquisition of any land or other immovable property for the purposes of the Devasthanams provided the acquisition is authorised by the Government;

(*viii*) the construction and maintenance of roads and communications and the lighting thereof for the convenience of the pilgrims and worshippers;

(*ix*) the training of archakas to perform the religious worship and ceremonies in the Devasthanams, and the training of adhyapakas and vedaparayanikas; and

(*x*) any work or undertaking for the purposes of the Devasthanams, authorised by the Government, so long as such authorisation subsists."

The Andhra Pradesh Charitable and Hindu Religious Institutions and Endowments Act of 1966:—The previous Act of 1951 is no longer in force now as a new Act (Act No. 17 of 1966) called the Andhra Pradesh Charitable and Hindu Religious Institutions and Endowments Act came into force recently. Chapter 14 of the above Act makes express provisions for the administration

of the T.T. Devasthanams. Sections 85 to 91 of the Act lay down the provisions governing the T. T. Devasthanams. Section 86 lays down that the administration of the temple should be by a Board of Trustees consisting of not more than 11 persons to be appointed by the Government, three of whom are to be members of the State Legislature, one person to belong to the scheduled castes and another to be a woman (subject to certain provisions made in Section 86). The Members of the Board of Trustees hold office for a term of three years. Section 87 directs the Government to appoint an Executive Officer and where necessary a Deputy Executive Officer for the temple. Under section 87(2) the Executive Officer is empowered to delegate statutory duties to his Deputy Executive Officer. Sections 88 and 89 lay down division of punitory powers on the employees of the Devasthanam between the Executive Officer and the Board of Trustees. Section 91 lays down the purposes for which the Devasthanam funds may be used, and is re-produced below:—

"91. (1) The funds of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams may be utilised for all or any of the following purposes and also for any other purposes permitted by any other provision of this Act:—

(*i*) Propagation of the religious tenets of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams and the maintenance, management and administration of the temples and the endowments and the properties of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams including the educational and other institutions specified in the First Schedule and the endowments and properties thereof:

Provided that the Government may, on a resolution passed by both Houses of the State Legislature by notification in the *Andhra Pradesh Gazette,* alter, add to, or omit any of the items in the said Schedule;

(*ii*) establishment and maintenance of hospitals and dispensaries for the relief of the pilgrims and worshippers visiting the temple;

(*iii*) construction and maintenance of choultries and rest-houses for the use and accommodation of the pilgrims;

(*iv*) provision of water-supply and other sanitary arrangements to the pilgrims and worshippers;

(*v*) establishment and maintenance of a dairyfarm and a veterinary hospital for the animals of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams;

(*vi*) acquisition of any land or other immovable property for the purpose of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, if such acquisition is authorised by the Government;

(*vii*) construction and maintenance of roads and communications and the lighting thereof for the convenience of the pilgrims and worshippers;

(*viii*) training of archakas to perform the religious worship and ceremonies in the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, and the training of adhyapakas and vedaparayanikas;

(*ix*) promoting the study of Indian languages including Sanskrit;

(*x*) any work or undertaking for the purpose of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, authorised by the Government; and

(*xi*) any other religious, charitable, social or educational purposes conneceed with or incidental to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, authorised by the Government.

(2) The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams shall, every year, out of their funds set apart a sum of not less than rupees two and a half lakhs towards the maintenance of Sri Venkateswara University.

(3) (*a*) It shall be lawful for the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams to establish an institution to be called the *Hindu Dharma Prathishthanam,* to make a foundation grant of such sum as the said Devasthanams may think fit for the said purpose and to set apart every year out of their funds, a sum of not less than rupees one lakh for the maintenance of the said *Hindu Dharma Prathishthanam.*

(b) The objects of the said *Hindu Dharma Prathishthanam* shall include—

(*i*) promotion and propagation of the Hindu Dharmas and the training of dharmacharyas, dharmapracharaks and such other personnel as may be required therefor:

(*ii*) preparation, publication and dissemination of literature relating to the Hindu Dharma;

(*iii*) the establishment and maintenance of institutions for imparting instructions in the Hindu Dharma, and

(*iv*) any other purpose connected with or incidental to the aforesaid objects.

(*c*) Subject to such rules as may be made by the Government in this behalf, the Board of Trustees of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams may make regulations for the purpose of carrying out the provisions contained in this subsection."

The enabling provisions of the Act have been used to good purpose by the Devasthanam Committee and several improvements made to the temple. Some of the more important achievements[1] are indicated below:—

Information Centres:—Information Centres and Choultries have been opened by the Devasthanam not only at

1. Material for this portion of the Chapter has been taken primarily from the T.T.D. Bulletin—Ananda Nilaya Vimanam Samprokshanam Special Supplement dated 26-8-1958.

Tirupati and Tirumalai but in other important cities in India. Several enquiry offices have also been opened to assist the pilgrims desirous of proceeding to Tirumalai to worship the Lord of Tirumalai.

Accommodation:—Prior to 1934 accommodation for pilgrims in Tirupati and Tirumalai was rather meagre. The Devasthanams have tackled this problem vigorously and several cottages, choultries, guest houses, etc. have been constructed both at Tirupati and Tirumalai. There is however need for more accommodation.

Sanitation and water supply:—Sanitation and water supply has been improved; protected water is supplied to Tirumalai from the Papanasanam water works. The sanitation of the town has been improved, malaria wiped out and a drainage scheme introduced.

Transport to Tirumalai:—Prior to the opening of a Ghat road between Tirupati and Tirumalai in 1944, pilgrims could reach Tirumalai only by climbing the hill by foot by taking the old sopana-marga. After the opening of the fourteen mile-long Ghat road, pilgrims can reach Tirumalai by road quickly and safely. The Devasthanam which started with two buses to transport pilgrims in the year 1944 has now an impressive fleet of buses. There is need however to reorganise the Department and provide for more buses as indicated separately. As a result, the revenue of the temple which was about 11 lakhs of rupees in 1933 has risen to about Rs. two crores. The Devasthanam's main income is from the offerings of the devotees in the Hundi, arjitham fees paid by the pilgrims for special Sevas etc. It also derives income from the auctioning of human hair offered to the Lord. It is said that the Devasthanams obtained about 6½ lakhs of rupees in 1962-63 by way of selling human hair and another 5½ lakhs by sale of prasadams. The Devas-

thanam is said to have obtained 11½ lakhs of rupees by way of sale of gold and silver, offered to the Lord (Hundi collections) in the year 1962-63.

Food and drinks:—The Devasthanam is also maintaining several canteens for the benefit of the pilgrims. The sale of vegetarian food and soft drinks itself for the year 1962-63 is said to have come to about Rs. 6 lakhs.

Education:—The Devasthanam maintains several educational institutions such as the Oriental College, three high schools, three colleges for men and women, several elementary schools, a Veda Patashala and Nadaswaram Patasala, a training school for sculpture and an Arts College at Delhi. A Public School has also been recently opened in Horsely Hills in Chittoor District.[1] The Devasthanam is said to be contributing about 2½ lakhs of rupees per annum for the maintenance of the Sri Venkateswara University at Tirupati. A Gosala and a dairy with about 300 Sindhi cows are being maintained by the Devasthanam.

T.T.D. Press and Publicity Department:—A printing press is run by the Devasthanam for printing religious literature. The publicity department conducts religious discourses. The thousand-pillared mantapam at Tirumalai has been converted into a Sadas and religious discourses, Harikathas and Bhajans are held in the Sadas every day. Learned Pandits, famous musicians etc. are invited to this Sadas often.

Other amenities to Pilgrims:—The entire route from Tirupati to Tirumalai is illuminated by electric lights. The Devasthanam provides free accommodation and free medical aid to pilgrims at Tirumalai.

Research:—The Oriental Institute started in 1938 does valuable research work in Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil and

1. It is learnt that this school has been closed now.

has collected several rare and valuable manuscripts. The Institute is at present under the management of the Sri Venkateswara University.

Charitable Institutions:—A Leprosy Home was started in the year 1939, and is under the charge of a medical officer. An orphanage started in the year 1943 is also run by the Devasthanam.

Ruia Hospital:—A philanthropist of Bombay, Sri Radhakrishna Ruia, donated five lakhs of rupees for a three-hundred-bed hospital at Tirupati. The Devasthanam donated ten lakhs of rupees for this project in addition to giving a four hundred acre plot for the hospital. This hospital is very well equipped.

Improvements to the temple[1]**:**—"The Dhvajastambha of Sri Govindarajaswami temple and the Balipeetam in Tirumala temple were gold gilded in 1934-35. A gem-set flower was prepared for being fixed in the Gold Kireet of Sri Venkateswara Swami in the year 1939. A silver car was made at a cost of Rs. 1 lakh in 1941. The Maharatham was also made for Tirumalai Sri Varu in the year 1942. A gem-set kireetam at a cost of 10 lakhs of rupees was prepared in the year 1945. The Makara Thoranam of Sri Varu was refixed in 1947. A gem-set Vaikuntha Hastha at a cost of 3 lakhs of rupees was made and adorned in 1954." The conch and chakra of the Lord have also been set with invaluable gems recently.

"Renovation works were (also) started from 1950 onwards. The inner Gopuram of Sri Govindaraja shrine, the Padikavali Gopuram of Sri Ramaswami temple, the gold gilding of the Kalasam of the Gopuram of Sri Padmavati temple at Tiruchanoor, remaking of the Bimbas of the

1. From the T.T.D. Bulletin—Ananda Nilaya Vimanam Samprokshanam special supplement dated 26-8-1958.

Mukha mandapam in Govindaraja shrine and Padmavati temple, the construction of the Padikavali and the inner Gopurams of Sri Venkateswara temple are some of the items worthy of mention."

The Ananda Vimanam for the Lord's temple was also renovated and regilded as already indicated in Chapter VI at a cost of Rs. 18 lakhs.

However more remains to be done. Suggestions for giving better facilities and amenities to pilgrims are indicated below:

(1) **Motto for the Administration:**—The main objective for the administration should be the welfare of the pilgrims. All steps should be taken to afford the pilgrims all facilities for worshipping the Lord with full devotion and peace of mind.

(2) **Sanctity of the Temple:**—Steps should be taken to keep up the sanctity of the temple at Tirumalai. In this connection the reported observations of His Holiness the Jagadguru Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Sankaracharya Swamy is relevant. Referring to the recent tragedy at Tirumalai, Sri Sankaracharya said that "it was his personal opinion that it was the cumulative result of the *apacharams* (wrongs) committed by some devotees willingly or unwillingly, though innocent people died in the tragedy. It was common knowledge that Tirumalai was being used for excursions and picnics by young men and women, as a pleasure resort instead of as a place of worship." (*The Hindu*). All steps should be taken to see that the sacred atmosphere in Tirumalai and Tirupati is kept up. Committing of nuisance in and around the temple knowingly or unknowingly should be severely discouraged and punished.

(3) **Increasing of Number of Hours of Dharma Darsanam. Steps to avoid congestion of pilgrims:**—Projections of

pilgrim traffic visiting the temple on any day during the next ten years indicate that the pilgrim traffic may go up to the alarming figure of 50,000 to 60,000 a day. Even at present the minimum number of pilgrims that visit the temple on festival days works out to about 20,000. On ordinary days the pilgrim traffic will be between 10,000 to 15,000. Assuming that five seconds time is given to each pilgrim, the time to be set apart for the darshan of 20,000 pilgrims visiting the temple a day works out to 28 hours. Thus even a full day is not enough for darshan of the Lord. Even if the time is reduced to $2\frac{1}{2}$ seconds for each pilgrim, the time within which 20,000 pilgrims can have darshan works out to 14 hours. At present the time given for dharmadarshan is only 12 hours. This indicates the urgency to increase the number of hours for dharmadarshanam.

The temple should therefore be open throughout the day and night and closed only for an hour or two between 12 midnight and 1 A.M. in the morning, to accommodate agamic prescriptions if any.

(4) **Arjithams and Dharmadarshanam:**—The recommendation given in this para flows out of the recommendations made above. While it is conceded that certain pujas such as the Sathumarai etc. have to be compulsorily performed in the temple, there is no reason why valuable temple time should be denied for dharmadarshanam by catering to arjitha seva pilgrims i.e. sevas in which money is collected and darshanam privilege given only to pilgrims who have the capacity to pay. After making allowance of time for the pujas and rituals which are a 'must' according to the Agamas, the time available could be reserved only for Dharmadarshanam. The temple of Sri Venkateswara should not be converted into a commercial concern where admission of pilgrims is done by collection of fees. The Omnipresent

and all-loving God should be accessible to all devotees freely. It is also felt that by eliminating arjitham pujas there will not be any significant reduction in the revenues of the temple. Devotees will continue to give their 'Mudupus' and offerings to the Lord whether arjitham pujas are open to them or not.

(5) **Arjitham Festivals:**—It is also for consideration whether arjitham festivals should not be performed in the Kalyanamantapam before the Utsava Vigraham only and not before the Moola Vigraham Deity. The 'Sankalpam' could perhaps be done before the Lord in the 'Garbhagudi' and the detailed rituals performed before the Utsava Vigraham. It would be relevant in this connection to point out that worshipping a proxy image is a historically accepted fact. Inscriptional evidence of the temple itself will show that a proxy image of Lord Venkateswara was being worshipped in the Tiruchanur temple in the year 850 A.D. to assist pilgrims who were not in a position to undertake the difficult journey up the hill to Tirumalai.

(6) **Second door-way for the Temple:**—In view of the increasing number of pilgrims it is also necessary to consider whether a second doorway can be opened in the temple, to function as an exit to the pilgrims who visit the temple. It is a well known fact that the temple of Srirangam has got gopurams and gopura dwarams on four sides—East, West, North and South. Even Vaishnavite temples, where the worship is according to Vaikhanasa agama (as in Tirumalai) have such gopurams and gopura dwarams, for example, Sri Parthasarathy temple in Triplicane etc. In case of any objection to making structural changes in the temple area by the Agama pandits, the question of having a subway in the circumambulatory path going by the name of Vimana Pradakshinam or a staircase in the outer Pradakshinam lead-

ing out, may be considered. The Varaha Purana and other puranas mention that one Tondaiman Chakravarthy was visiting the temple through a tunnel in the olden days, and opening a sub-way in the Vimana Pradakshinam would not be such a modern idea after all !

(7) **Agama Pandits and Religious Gurus Committee:**— It is desirable to have a Standing Committee of Agama Pandits and Religious Gurus to discuss and advise the temple authorities in various matters connected with the temple as well as to consider and recommend suggestions which will improve the religious and sacred atmosphere of Tirumalai.

(8) **Strengthening the Administration:**—There is need to strengthen the administration at Tirumalai. There is urgent need to strengthen the police force in particular. The need for establishing a prohibition station on the hills also has been recognised. The T.T.D. transport administration needs strengthening and at least a minimum of 100 buses should be on the road every day.

The T.T.D. administration is at present controlled by a Board of Trustees constituted under section 86 of the Andhra Pradesh Charitable and Hindu Religious Institutions and Endowments Act. The question whether the number of members in the Board of Trustees can be reduced with advantage to step up efficiency is an aspect which may be considered by the Government.

The Executive Officer (according to section 87) has to perform several statutory duties and delegation of powers by him is only possible to the Deputy Executive Officer under section 87(2) of the Act, No. 17 of 1966. It is acknowledged that the Executive Officer is over-burdened with much avoidable routine work. It should be worth considering whether large scale delegation of powers can be given to

officers working under the Executive Officer to enable him to exercise effective control over the huge administrative organisation working under the T.T.D. Board.

The Executive Officer is also at present subject to control and check by the Head of the department i.e. the Commissioner of Endowments and can approach the Government only through the Head of the Department and this results in delay. The question of upgrading the post of the Executive Officer of the T.T.D. to that of the Commissioner of Endowments and vesting him with powers to deal directly with the Government needs urgent consideration.

(9) **A well-equipped Hospital at Tirumalai:**—There is urgent need for a well-equipped hospital with sufficient bed-strength and modern equipment.

(10) **Second Ghat Road:**—The work on the second ghat road should be expedited.

(11) **Aerodrome at Renigunta:**—The construction of an aerodrome at Renigunta connecting important cities like Hyderabad, Madras, Delhi etc. and the construction of a Helepad with helicopter facilities at Tirumalai need urgent consideration.

(12) **Accommodation:**—Accommodation available for the poorer sections of the pilgrims is very inadequate in spite of the valiant efforts being made by the temple. There is urgent need to provide more and more accommodation to the poorer sections of the pilgrims, in preference to the richer sections.

(13) **Pilgrim queues inside the Temple:**—Pilgrim collection halls should be put up near the Pushkarani quadrangle a little away from the temple and facilities for pilgrims such as bath rooms, urinals etc. should be made available to them. Pilgrim queues starting from this quadrangle can go around the temple prakaram i.e. near the back portion of the

temple and be made to enter the temple from the police station side facing the temple Mukhadwaram. Sitting facilities should be made for the pilgrims, while they are moving outside the temple. The existing practice of leaving the pilgrims in ill-lighted and ill-ventilated queue-stands of the temple for hours together should stop. The temple authorities should see that any pilgrim entering the Mukhadwaram of the temple should be able to obtain the darshanam of the Lord with minimum delay in about 20 to 25 minutes. Pilgrims specially women and children are not able to withstand the strain of waiting for long in closed stands and much nuisance is committed in the queue-stands of the temple by children, spoiling the sanctity of the temple. As these stands are very un-hygienic, queues may be regulated only outside the temple by providing shelter covers above the queue-stands and action taken to see that darshanam is given to pilgrims with minimum delay.

(14) **Pradakshinam around the Deity:**—Pilgrims having darshanam of the Lord move about now from right to left and not left to right. This apradakshina movement may be avoided.

(15) **Better Drinking Water Facilities and First Aid Arrangements:**—Better drinking water facilities and first aid arrangements should be made available to the pilgrims on the Hill.

(16) **Lighting at Tirumalai:**—The electric lighting at Tirumalai may be further improved.

(17) **Pilgrim Guides:**—At present there are no Pilgrim Guides on the hill to guide and assist the pilgrims. Pilgrim Guides may be appointed by the Devasthanam to assist the pilgrims.

(18) **Uniform to T.T.D. employees and Pilgrim Guides:**—There is urgent need to give a distinctive uniform to T.T.D.

employees and Pilgrim Guides. This will facilitate easy recognition by the pilgrims needing their help.

(19) **Pilgrim welfare:**—The approach of the administration should be to cater to the welfare and needs of the pilgrim. Courtesy should be extended to every pilgrim visiting Tirumalai, howsoever poor.

The District officers such as the District Collector and the Superintendent of Police should be more actively associated with the functioning of the T.T.D. Board so that they may be able to help and be helped in the due discharge of their functions and promote the welfare of pilgrims visiting the Tirumalai.

(20) **Urgency to streamline the T.T.D. administration:**—It is commonly felt that more could be done by the Devasthanam administration taking into account their resources position and the sympathetic attitude of the Government of Andhra Pradesh to help them in improving the temple administration. It is felt that a very senior officer preferably a retired Chief Secretary should be appointed as a one-man Committee to study in detail the working of the T.T.D. administration as it is at present and to recommend measures to streamline the administration to give it a pilgrim-welfare-oriented approach.

(21) **Perspective planning:**—The problems of the T.T.D. administration vis-a-vis the pilgrim who goes in all humility and devotion to obtain the blessing of Lord Venkateswara can only be solved by a study of all the problems as a single unit and by resorting to perspective planning over a period of the next 20 years. This perspective planning approach is lacking at present. Unless such a perspective plan is drawn up and resorted to, pilgrim satisfaction will not be achieved. A scientific approach and scientific attitude should

be developed to deal with some of the problems connected with pilgrim welfare. In problems connected with worshipping of the Lord and temple rituals, the administration should not interfere with existing practices unless a competent standing conference of religious Gurus and Agama Pandits sanction changes. The T.T.D. administration should more and more confine itself to religious duties and not fritter away its energies and resources in tackling secular functions and social welfare functions which rightly fall under the ambit of the Government of Andhra Pradesh and the Government of India. Devotees go to Tirumalai in all humility and devotion in thousands every day to worship Sri Venkateswara, the Lord of the seven hills. The aim of the administration should be to see that these devotees are assured peace of mind and celestial joy by giving them all facilities to have happy darshan of Lord Venkateswara.

A heart-rending tragedy occurred in the precincts of the temple on 12th August 1967 resulting in the death of eighteen pilgrims waiting in the queue-stands of the temple. Such tragedies should not recur. The administration should be ever vigilant, reorganise itself and plan effectively for the future if Tirupati is to be 'Kaliyuga Vaikuntham'. If there is a paradise on earth, yes, it is at Tirumalai. As Nammalwar puts it 'the Valarvoli Mayan has manifested Himself at Tirumalirumsolai surrounded by Divya Udyanavanas. Worship Him in this Vaikuntha on earth while you can and art young and before old age overtakes thee'.

Several of these suggestions were made by the author of this book as District Collector, Chitoor, in the years 1966-1968. It is gratifying to record that many of them have been accepted and efforts made by the Tirupati-Tirumalai Devasthanams to cater to the requirements of the *poor pil-*

grim. It is the poor pilgrim who stands uncomplainingly in the never-ending queues who is the real devotee of the Lord; and the objective of the T.T.D. administration should be to give full facilities for the worship of the Lord by these real devotees who are near and dear to Him always.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION—THE KATYAVALAMBITA MURTHI

The Lord of Tirumalai, Sri Venkateswara, is the Lord of our hearts. He is the Lord of the Universe, the Lord of all creation and is the Light of the world. He has manifested Himself on Tirumalai in India as Shri Narayana to lead his devotees to ultimate freedom. This is clear from his being a Katyavalambita Murthi, a pose which indicates that the Lord's protection and release from all bondages is assured to those worshipping His feet with constant devotion. He is no other than Lord Krishna, the embodiment of Love. He is no other than Siva, the Lord of Aiswaryam and Destruction. He is no other than Shri Rama, the embodiment of Dharma, Truth, Beauty and Courage. The Lord is a *Varada Murthi*—one who bestows his divine grace liberally on his devotees. He is the Katyavalambita Murthi and protector or *Rakshaka* for his Bhakthas who trust him and worship Him. The Katyavalambita Murthi is One who is easily realised through *Bhakti* and *Prapatti*.

It is interesting to speculate here on the origin of *Bhakti* in India. Majumdar traces the beginnings of *Bhakti* in India to the hymns of Rigveda.[1] Actually *Bhakti* is as old as Man, and the adoration or leaning on a higher power is an emotional quality in Man derived from the herd instincts of the mammals and the instinct of Fear of the Unknown. In those dark ages of the Mind, when Man was evolving out his consciousness, he must have feared what-

1. *Bhakti Renaissance* by A. K. Majumdar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, p. 1.

ever he did not understand and adored the Sun, the Moon, the rain, the trees, the Fire etc. which lent him support. The early man was afraid of darkness and the Sun dispelled for him this darkness. The Fire again was wonderful as it kept him warm and protected him from wild beasts. It is no wonder that the fear of the Unknown and the support which he obtained from natural phenomena gave birth in Man for the first time to emotions which fathered the ideas of Bhakti and love towards the Supreme Spirit.[1] The beginnings of Bhakti should therefore actually be traced to the days when the first prehistoric Indians inhabited the south-eastern regions of India in the stone ages.

The Dravidians themselves are supposed to have come to India later and settled down to an agricultural life about the period between 3000 and 4000 B.C. According to Haimendorf they came to South India by sea from the West and not only imposed their speech on the people before them in the South, but soon learnt to integrate themselves with the beneficial Indo-Aryan influences from Northern India.[2] The Mohenjo Daro and Harappa civilizations which were pre-Aryan civilisations dating back to the Dravidian period deserve our notice. These civilizations are ascribed to Dravidians. Whoever they were, Dravidians or others, they certainly had a well-developed religion worshipping a male God, who could perhaps be recognised as Siva, a Mother Goddess and other Gods in the forms of animals and snakes. Siva (Rudra) and Vishnu later became the prominent Hindu deities in Vedic India. Siva was of course the more ancient deity between the two.

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1. The Vedic rituals with the objective of propitiating the Gods through Fire must be traced to these prehistoric days when Man began to develop a consciousness of his own.
2. *Development of Religion in South India* by K.A. Neelakanta Sastry, pp. 2 to 24, Orient Longmans, 1963.

What exactly is *Bhakti* may then be briefly considered by us. "The word *Bhakti* is derived from the root Bhaj by the application of the kti suffix, which expresses an action, (Panini, III, 3, 94) and means among other things service, devotion, attachment, loyalty, worship and homage. According to the Sandilya-bhakti-sutra, bhakti is *paranuraktir-isvare* which may be rendered as 'infinite attachment to God' while according to the Narada-bhakti-sutra it is Sa-tasmin parama-prema-rupa; that is, infinite love for God. The Narada-bhakti-sutra then states:—

"(1) According to the son of Parasara (i.e. Vyasa), bhakti is attachment to worship of God etc.; (2) according to Garge, bhakti is fondness for hearing the stories of the various sports of the Lord; (3) according to Sandilya, bhakti is such attachment to God which is not opposed to self; and (4) according to Narada, bhakti consists in offering all activities to God and inducing a feeling of extreme restlessness and misery at the slightest lapse in remembrance of God; and then the author of the Narada-bhakti-sutra adds *asty-evam-evam,* that is bhakti is exactly as described above. Thus it is apparent that by the time that the Narada-bhakti-sutra was written, there were several definitions of bhakti, indicating several schools of thought, and the Narada-bhakti-sutra was possibly written to harmonize all the known views. The last of the Bhakti Sutras is probably the Bhakti-mimamsa-sutra of unknown authorship. According to this text the highest object of human striving should not be moksha or liberation but Bhakti itself. As M.M. Gopinath Kaviraj has observed: 'The rejection of moksha as the supreme end of human aspirations, follows as a necessary corollary from the conception of bhakti as in itself the highest form of bliss, higher indeed—so it is boldly declared—

than Brahmananda which is revealed in Moksha".[1] According to the great monistic philosopher Adi Sankara, Upasana which is worship consists in approaching the object of worship as instructed by the Sastras by visualising it and dwelling on it for a long time steadily in a current of the same idea, continuous like a flowing thread of oil.[2] Sankara however did not uphold the performance of rituals, believing in the Gnana path and preaching that the Atman is Brahman. Ramanuja defines bhakti as *dhruvam smriti* and regards it as only a kind of knowledge. "In the Bhakti-Chintamani, bhakti has been defined as *Yoge Viyogavitprema* i.e. it is that form of love in which even when the two are together, they are afraid of being disassociated and when they are not together they have a painful desire for Union."[3] According to Madhva, Bhakti and Gnana are practically synonymous. "The supremacy of Bhakti is made clear by Madhva in his commentary on the Brahma Sutra (III 2-19) where he observes that the souls' essential nature does not become fully manifested without bhakti (*bhakti vina natat sadisyam samyag=abhivyajate*)."[4] The love of Gopis to Krishna again is the highest form of Bhakti and self-surrender to God.

Bhakti in the Puranas:—The Puranas which are the religious poetry of the period of the school representing the rough myth and story, symbol and parable, the traditional view of God and man, cosmogony and social order[5]

1. *Bhakti Renaissance* by A.K. Majumdar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965.
2. *Sankara's teachings in his own words* by Swami Atmananda, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1964.
3. From Das Gupta's *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. IV, pp. 349-350, Cambridge University Press, 1955.
4. *Bhakti Renaissance* by A. K. Majumdar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965, p. 51.
5. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's *Indian Philosophy*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1956.

extol Bhakti as the easiest path to realise God. The *Bhagavata Purana,* dated about the tenth century is a work which propagates Bhakti as no other Purana has done. It has been held to be a work composed by a South Indian scholar as it describes the Tamilian Alwars in it. The various characteristics of Bhakti are listed out in the Bhagavatam as *Sravanam, Kirtanam, Smaranam, Padasevanam, archanam, vandanam, dasyam, sakhyam* and *atma nivedanam.* It also idealises the love between Krishna and the Gopis. The Bhagavatam also stresses that Vishnu is the One and Only God and that those who meditate on Vishnu will obtain Kaivalya. It also stresses the importance of Bhakti: "In this world, not vows, not pilgrimages, not yoga practices, not study of scriptures, not sacrificial rites, not philosophical discourses but only devotion can give us freedom."[1] "Dharma, according to the Bhagavatam (also) consists in the worship of God without any ulterior motive —a worship performed with a perfect sincerity of heart by men who are kindly disposed towards all, and who have freed themselves from all feelings of jealousy. This worship involves the knowledge of the absolute, as a natural consequence of the realisation of the worshipfulness of the spirit and naturally leads to Supreme Bliss".

The *Brahma Vaivarta Purana* also stresses Bhakti. In a dialogue between Sri Hari and Siva, the Lord makes it clear that Bhakti is of nine kinds, and includes Namasmarana, Namaguna kirthana, Nama japa, Rupa chintana, Charana vandana, bowing to the Lord, Vinaya and Atma samarpana. The importance of the repetition of the 'Radha' mantram is stressed in this Purana.

Again the *Padma Purana* defines Vishnu Bhaktas as those who meditate on Vishnu always. Vishnu Bhaktas are

1. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's *The Brahma Sutras,* George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1960.

not influenced by *Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada* or *Matsarya.* These devotees should have 'sama bhakti' for Vishnu, Siva and Brahma. The importance of the Rama Taraka Mantra is also extolled by this Purana. Vishnu, Brahma and Siva are considered to be One.

Bhakti in the GITA:—The importance of Bhakti path to salvation is clearly explained by the Lord himself in the Gita. Arjuna the seeker asks Him about Saguna and Nirguna Upasanas and their relative merits in the process of God-realisation. The devotees of the first path visualise the Viswarupa of the Lord, or worship a Daiva Murthi of their choice with constant devotion and fervour. Persons in a more evolved state meditate on the 'Akshara Brahma' —the One which is beyond the ken of the sense organs, the One which pervades the whole universe and is formless. Which of these two paths is to be preferred by the devotee? And the Lord answers that he that (*i*) fixes his mind on the Paramatma, (*ii*) meditates always on God and Godly matters and (*iii*) worships the Lord with constant devotion, is a Yogi. The One is formless as well as capable of taking all forms. As such He can be realised by Saguna and Nirguna meditation. The devotee who is able to control his sense organs, is phlegmatic, has developed equanimity of mind and temper, who is a well-wisher of the welfare of all beings, and who worships the Akshara Brahma that is undefinable, imperceptile, unimaginable, formless, unmoving, non-transient, ever permanent and all-pervading reaches and realises the Lord.

Lord Krishna then revealed to Arjuna that those who worship Him are redeemed by Him from the Ocean of Samsara

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम् ।
अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनंजय ।।

Those who cannot concentrate their minds on the Lord and worship him thus should try again and again. Abhyasa would help them in the realisation of God.

The devotees could also resort to the performance of rituals such as the chanting of hymns or take shelter in the yoga of the Lord by dedicating the fruit of all their actions to the Lord. Knowledge is superior to Practice. Meditation is superior to Knowledge while the disinterested performance of Action is superior to Meditation and the devotees who follow the path thereby acquire tranquillity and communion with the Lord.

The Lord lists out 35 qualities in a devotee which make the Bhaktha his beloved. They are as follows:—

(1) *Adveshta Sarvabhootanam*—One who has no hatred to any being, (2) Friendship to all beings, (3) Kindness, (4) One who is not attached, (5) One who is not egoistic, (6) One who suffers pain and happiness with equability, (7) One who is endowed with the gift of *kshamā*, (8) One who is contented always, (9) One who has full control of his mind, (10) One who is determined, (11) One who has surrendered his mind and buddhi i.e. reason to the Lord, (12) One who does not fear the world or gives it cause to fear him, (13) One who is unmoved by joy, anger and fear, (14) One who is completely detached and desireless, (15) One who is pure in and outside, (16) One who is a *daksha* i.e. one who is skilled in action, (17) One who is indifferent about the fruits of his action, (18) One who is a *gatavyatha* that is one who is not touched by emotions like pain etc., (19) One who does not claim authorship of his deeds, (20) One who is not elated by joy, (21) One who does not hate anything—animate or inanimate, (22) One without regrets, (23) One who has no earthly desires, (24) One who has abandoned good as well as the evil fruits of action, (25) One who treats his friends and enemies alike, (26) One to

whom honour and dishonour are equal, (27) One who is not affected either by heat or cold, (28) One to whom pain or happiness are one and the same, (29) One who is not attached to anything, (30) One who is unmoved either by flattery or abuse, (31) One who is a *mouni* i.e. one who speaks little if any, (32) One who is contented with the little given to him by Providence, (33) One who is not attached to his place of abode, (34) One who is a *sthiramati,* i.e. one with a mind that is steady always and (35) One who is devoted to the Lord.

The Bhakti movement got its fillip in the time of Ramanuja. Ramanuja however is not the founder of the Vaishnava movement in India. The beginnings of the Vaishnava movement can be traced to the Vedic time when Vishnu was one of the Vedic Deities; the Purusha Sukta of the Rigveda and the doctrines of the Pancharatra literature including the Vaishnava Upanishads proclaimed ages before Ramanuja that 'Narayana' is the greatest of Gods. Then came the twelve Alwars of Tamilnad belonging to the early Sangam period, who were also devotees of Lord Vishnu. These were later followed by the great Vaishnavacharyas, Nadamuni, Alavandar and Yamunacharya. Nadamuni was born in the village called Viranarayana and is said to have collected all the hymns composed by the Alwars. He belonged to the 10th century and toured the whole of India. Yamunacharya, Nadamuni's grandson, was born in 918 A.D. and is said to have expired in 1038 A.D. He defended the Vaishnava Agamas and proclaimed that they were as important as the Vedas. Ramanuja was the successor to the traditions of all these predecessors. He however elaborated and preached his Visishtadvaita philosophy. He travelled widely throughout India to preach his doctrines. He recognised the existence of the One Brahman who is all-pervading, and all-powerful, but glorified Vedic rituals and stressed the im-

portance of the Bhakti path to realise God. His teachings became popular due to the inner strength of Vaishnavism which stressed on *Prapatti*—love and surrender to God—which was a path which could be followed by one and all irrespective of caste considerations. Due to its catholic and liberal approach the Vaishnava movement which started in South India about the 12th century A.D. succeeded and Vaishnavism flourished.

Vaishnavism in South India developed later into the existing two schools, the Vadagalai School and the Tengalai school. Pillai Lokacharya became the representative of the Tengalai sect while Vedanta Desika became the founder of the Vadagalai sect. "The Tengalais regard the Tamil Prabandham as canonical, and are indifferent to the Sanskrit tradition. The Vadagalais accept the two as equally authoritative. The Tengalais adopt the doctrine of *doshabhogya*, namely that God enjoys sin, since it gives a larger scope for the display of his grace. The Vadagalais use more Sanskrit than Tamil, and adopt elements of Sakta theology in their conception of Lakshmi." Both the schools however do not differ in the essentials of Vishnu worship and believe in *Prapatti*.

Prapatti is actually a concept of divine love and grace spontaneously bestowed on the devotees of the Lord; all that is required for the devotee is complete self-surrender to God. "Prapatti is complete resignation to God, and is, according to the Bhagavatas, the most effective means for gaining salvation. It is open to all, the learned as well as the ignorant, the high as well as the low, while the path of *bhakti*, involving as it does *jnana* and *karma*, is confined to the three upper classes. But anyone, after taking instruction from a preceptor, may fling himself on the bosom of God and take refuge in him. According to the Southern school (Tengalais) which follows more closely the tradition

of the Alvars, *prapatti* is the only way to salvation, and no more effort on the part of the devotee is necessary. God saves the soul who has utterly surrendered himself to Him. The Northern school (Vadagalais) holds that *prapatti* is one way of reaching the goal, and not the only way. For them human effort is an essential factor in salvation. The individual who has qualified himself by *karma, jnana, bhakti* and *prapatti* wins the favour of the Lord. This school upholds the *markata nyaya,* or the monkey theory, since the young monkey is to exert and stick to the mother; while the Southern holds the *marjala nyaya* or the cat theory, since the kitten is taken up by the cat with its mouth. This school holds that nothing depends on man's effort, for the grace of God selects the individuals to be freed. It also believes that the soul is seized by God in one supreme act, which need not be repeated, while the Northern section insists on the continuous offering of the soul to God."[1]

The Vaishnavas believe in the efficacy of the Moolamantra, Dvayamantra and Charama sloka. The Mulamantra is the Ashtakshari mantra *Om Namo Narayana.* The Dvayamantra reads as follows: *Sriman Narayana Charanam Saranam Prapadye; Srimathay Narayanaya Namaha.* The Charama sloka is the last sloka of *Bhagavadgita* which reads *Sarvadharman Parityajya Mamekam Saranam Vraja, Ahamtva Sarvapapebhyo Mokshaishyami Masuchaha.* These mantras have special significance for the Srivaishnavas. The significance of the Mulamantra *Om Namo Narayanaya* is as follows:—

"The *Pranava* in the *Mula Mantra* sums up wisdom in the sacred sound and is the supreme *Mantra* of the Nyasa Vidya. The letter अ or *Akara* connotes *Paramatman* as

1. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's *Indian Philosophy,* George Allen & Unwin Ltd., pp. 705-706.

the source of all things, ideas and words, the twentysixth *Tatva* which is the truth of all things and also the alpha and omega of language; *Ukara* or the letter उ denotes Śri in the dual sense of *Śriyahpati*; *Makara* or the letter म refers to the *Jiva* who is thus declared to be the *Adheya* or supported and the *Sesha* or dependent of *Śriyahpati*. The *Nyasa Vidya* condemns self-conceit and self-love and affirms the truth of *Paratantryam* or the soul's utter dependence on God, and it signifies the self-oblation of the *Jiva* to *Paramatman* who is its self. The *Mula Mantra* is an expansion of the *Pranava*, and it makes the meaning more clear by equating Brahman with Narayana and explaining the means to *Moksha* as *Atmanivedana* or self-gift to the *Śeshi*. The term Narayana in the *Mantra* is *Yogarudha*, i.e. significant and singular. He is the one without a second, not in the mathematical but in the metaphysical sense. As *Akara* and Narayana, *Paramatman* is immanent in all beings as their life, without losing His transcendental eminence and is the *Sarva Rakshaka* that redeems all *Jivas* from their evil career. He is the ground of all existence and the giver of all good. *Nara* is the *Makara* of *Pranava* and it refers to the universe of *Cit* and *Acit* of which Narayana is the pervading Self. Narayana is immanent in the *Nara* and is also the goal or *Ayana* of the *Nara*. The middle word *Namah* of the *Mantra* prescribes the abandonment of all egoism (ahankara) or self-naughting and *Saranagati* as the chief *Hita* or *Upaya*, and it also connotes the truth that God is the only goal of life. Thus the *Mula Mantra* as a whole and in each of its parts proclaims that Narayana alone is the source of all existence, the goal of all experience and the means of realising that goal. He is the saviour of all *Jivas* and all actions should be dedicated to the *Śeshi* who is the real Actor, and

the highest offering is self-gift to the *Śeshi* to whom the self belongs by divine right."[1]

The significance of the dvaya mantra is as follows:— "At the feet of Narayana who is the Lord of all, who is in every way and supremely blissful (or enjoyable) and who is inseparable from Lakshmi, and in order that I may obtain the removal of all that is opposed to all kinds of service in all places, at all times and in all states or circumstances and to receive (the privilege of) full and perfect service to them, I, who am destitute of *Upayas,* surrender the responsibility of the protection of myself with the accompaniments of the five *Angas* or accessories at the feet of Narayana, so that I may not have anything to do for such things as the responsibility for protecting myself."[2]

The Charama sloka of the *Bhagavadgita* enshrines the philosophy of Saranagati or surrender to the Supreme God. In this Sloka, 'Renounce all dharmas', says Lord Krishna in the Gita and seek Me the One for thy protection and I shall deliver you from all sins'. The essence of the Gita is said to be contained in this sloka which stresses the *Bhakti* and *Prapatti* margas to achieve God realisation.

Influence of Ramanuja's and Madhva's teachings:— Ramanuja's Visishtadvaita philosophy influenced Ramananda (1300-1411), Kabir (1398-1527), Nanak and Tulsidas (1511-1637) who themselves later became pillars of the Bhakti movement in India.

Madhvacharya said to have been born in 1199 A.D. in Udipi blazed a new trail in Indian Philosophy and Bhakti movement in India, by propounding his Dvaita system of

1. *The Philosophy of Visishtadvaita,* by P. N. Srinivasachari, pp. 384-385.
2. From Sri Vedanta Desika's *Srimad Rahasyatraya Sara*: *Sriman Narayana charanam saranam prapadye Srimate Narayanaya Namaha.*

philosophy. He refuted Sankara's monism, proclaimed that Vishnu was the Godhead and asserted that individual souls and Brahman were two separate entities. Madhva's dvaita philosophy influenced Sri Chaitanya and several other seers of Central and Southern India.

Devotees of the twelfth century A.D.:—The great poet Jayadeva, the author of the celebrated *Gita Govinda,* is said to have been a resident of the court of Lakshmana Sena of Bengal. The Sena dynasty in Bengal was founded in the 11th century by one Vijaya Sena and Lakshmana Sena was his grandson. *Gita Govinda* was perhaps therefore written in the last years of the 11th or the beginning of the twelfth century. The central theme of this erotic and immortal poem is the love between Radha and Krishna.

Devotees of the thirteenth century A.D.:—While Ramanuja and Madhva stand out among the sages of India belonging to the twelfth century, the sages Gnaneswar, Namdev and Bilwamangal stand out in India as great devotees in the thirteenth century. The first two are the founders of the Bhakti school of Maharashtra.

Gnaneswar (1271-1297) A.D.), the Maharashtrian Saint, was a devotee of 'Vittala' of Pandharpur. He is the author of the great commentary on the Gita, *Gnaneswari.* He emphasised on *Guru susrusha* and *Bhakti* as the pathways to Mukti.

Namdev (1270-1350) was the son of a tailor and is famous for his mystic songs or abhangas on God-realisation. He was a contemporary and associate of Saint Gnaneswar and pointed out that the 'Namasmarana' of the Lord was the only way to achieve God.

Bilwamangal, the composer of the *Sri Krishna Karnamrita,* was again a great devotee of Lord Krishna.

Devotees and Saints of the fourteenth century A.D.:— Saint Ramananda stands out as the towering figure in India in this century. Ramananda (1300-1411) was the apostle of Bhakti in Northern India in the middle ages. He believed that Rama is Brahman and was the main prop for the Bhakti cult of his age. It is said he effectively influenced the movements of Sikhism, Brahmoism and Sufism, that later took origin in India. Kabir (1398-1527) was his disciple. Other followers of his were Raidas, Tulasi Das, etc.

Kabir (1398-1527) preached the gospel of his Guru Ramananda.

Jaat Pati Pachai Na Koi
Hari Ko Bhae So Hari Ka Hai.

"None shall enquire into thy caste. He who shall recite the Name of the Lord will be claimed by Him."[1]

Devotees and Saints of the fifteenth century A.D.:— It is in the fifteenth century A.D. that we have a crop of realised souls. These include Narsi Mehta of Gujarat (1414-1481), Chandidas (1417-1477), Vidyapati (1400-1507), Surdas (1479-1584), Nanak (1469-1538), Sri Chaitanya (1484-1532), Vallabhacharya (1479-1531), Pothana, Purandhara Dasa and Tallapaka Annamacharya (1414-1503) etc. Some of these sages have been mentioned in the foregoing pages.

Narsi Mehta was a Srivaishnava who advocated in his 'kirtans' the 'namasmarana' of Hari. "He is considered to be the greatest kirtanist of his time and a pioneer whose contribution to Gujarati literature is the greatest. Only Sri Mira Bai comes near to him. All the others such as Premanand fall far short of him and cannot compare with him when describing the Bhakti themes and Radha Krishna's exploits. As the propounder and preacher of

1. *Sufis, Mystics and Yogis of India* by Bankey Behari, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1962.

ethical and moral principles, his place in Gujarat is virtually pre-eminent amongst the saints."[1]

Chandidas, a poet of Bengal, is famous for his song of love of Radha Krishna.

Pothana is the celebrated Telugu poet belonging to the period between 1400-1500 A.D. He is the author of the Telugu Bhagavatham and was a great devotee of Sri Rama.

Purandara Dasa is the great Carnatic saint of Mysore famous for his kritis on Vittal. He is a contemporary of Annamacharya, the great Telugu Vaishnavite composer of love songs on the Lord of Tirumalai. Both these saints have been mentioned in Chapter VI of this book.

Vidyapathi[2] (1400-1507), the Maithili saint, was a contemporary of Chandidas and has sung of Radha Krishna leelas. His poems and dramas have as their central theme the divine love between Radha and Krishna.

Surdas (1479-1584), the composer of *Sur-Sagar*, was a devotee of Sri Vallabha and he has sung in his poems the leelas of Radha and Krishna.

Nanak is a class by himself and is the founder of Sikhism in India. He believed in the Oneness of God and his hymns in the 'Adigrantha' of the Sikhs stress the Bhakti path to understand God.

Sri Chaitanya or Sri Krishna Chaitanya of Bengal (1484-1532) is a votary of Krishna Prema. Krishna was to him, the lover, the loving as well as giver of all bliss. He settled down at Puri and worshipped Lord Jagannatha in the last years of his life.

Vallabha (1479-1531) is the next saint-philosopher who deserves notice. He is the propounder of Pushti Bhakti.

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1. *Minstrels of God*, Part II, by Bankey Behari, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1956.
2. *Minstrels of God*, Part II, by Bankey Behari, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1956.

It is said that Pushti Bhakti was propounded by this Telugu philosopher in the court of the Vijayanagar Kings. While recognising that Karma, Jnana and Bhakti margas are easily practised only by the cultured, he was anxious to show a way to others towards freedom from bondage. The highest is Krishna, the Bhagavat or Brahman or Paramatman. The concept of Pushti is based on the Mundakopanishad sloka that God realisation is possible only as a result of God's grace. All that is required of the devotee is "to throw oneself at the feet of God with complete faith in Him. While Pushti marga is the easier path of self-realisation for women and persons belonging to the lowly classes, there would be no bar for one and all adopting this marga to salvation. Everyone desirous of realising God, but incapable of fulfilling that desire in any other way is asked to approach a spiritual preceptor, who is always engaged in the worship of Sri Krishna, who is free from vices and who is a critical student of the Bhagavatam. The preceptor first of all gives him a mantra (*Sri Krishnaya Saranam Mama*) which tells him that his only guide from that time is Krishna. This is generally known as the *Sarana mantra.* Afterwards the Guru takes him to an image of Krishna, gives him a Tulasi leaf, recites the mantra for initiation, makes him repeat the mantra and asks him to put the Tulasi leaf near the feet of the image. This mantra is always kept secret".[1] This was the Brahma Sambanda initiation and after the initiation, the devotee worships the image of Krishna like a Gopi worshipping Krishna. He has to surrender himself completely to Krishna, with body, mind and wealth, the dedication being to Krishna and not to the preceptor.

1. *The Pushti marga of Vallabhacharya,* Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Sastri Memorial Volume, pp. 300-306.

Devotees of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries:— The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the birth of great sages and minstrels of God such as Mirabai and Rai Das (1547-1614), Tulsi Das (1511-1637), Tukaram (1608-1649) and Ramdas (1627-1683).

Ramdas was the preceptor to the great national hero Sivaji. He is also a great poet of Maratha literature. It is said that when he once begged alms from Sivaji, he was given away the whole kingdom of the Marathas and that this was returned to Sivaji with his blesings. He is the author of *Dasa Bodhi*. 'The gospel of surrender to the lotus feet of the Lord and activity employing those gifts with wisdom is the subject-matter of that great work which is full of instruction to Sivaji."[1]

Tulsidas (1511-1637), considered to be an incarnation of Valmiki, is the author of the celebrated *Sri Ramacharita Manas*.

Mirabai (1547-1614), the royal devotee of Chitor, is wellknown for her devotional Meera Bhajans on Lord Krishna. Her Guru was Rai Das, a cobbler.

Tukaram (1608-1648) is the celebrated Marathi singer of Abhangas. He was a born saint.

Tukaram, Ekanath and Ramdas were all saints who emphasised the need to surrender oneself to God to achieve realisation.

Devotees of the eighteenth century:—The South Indian seer Thyagaraja stands out pre-eminent during the 18th century. He was a great devotee of Sri Rama and composed innumerable 'Kirtanas' in Telugu, singing the glory of the Lord. These emotional outpourings of the self-realised saint form the bedrock, foundation, superstructure and glory of

1. *Sufis, Mystics and Yogis of India* by Bankey Behari, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1962.

Indian Carnatic music as already pointed out.

Raja Ram Mohan Rai who founded the Brahmo Samaj in 1828 was born in 1774 in this century.

Modern Developments:—This has been the age of reform, with the birth of Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj founded by Dayananda Saraswathi (1824-1883), the Theosophical Society, the Ramakrishna Mission etc.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (1834-1886), Swami Vivekananda, his disciple (1826-1902) who glorified Vedanta, the great Mahatma Gandhi, sage Ramana Maharshi of South India and the Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam are all personalities who have moulded Hindu thought into new channels by revitalising Hinduism.

India has always been a land of saints and her message to the world has always been spiritual in content, that Man should realise the God in him. Bhakti is one of the several paths to such self-realisation.

The Lord of Tirumalai—the Katyavalambita Murthi—is all-pervading—(*Vasudevah Sarvamiti*) and we learn from him in the Gita that the way to realise Him is by constant devotion—*Bhaktya Mamabhijanati*. To achieve realisation we have only to follow the Lord's injunction in the Gita *Mamekam Saranam Vraja*, and He will deliver us from all sins and bondage. May the Lord's grace help us to journey onwards towards this Ultimate Goal.

———

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Swamy Pushkarini Tank with the L *se* *takin* *a bath after the*

THE AUTHOR

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The author's other publications include *Sri Kalahasti Temple, Enugu Veeraswami's Journal, Telugu Srungara Padamulu, Manpower Planning and Employment in India.* A volume of *Inscriptions from Mackenzie-Brown Records* is under compilation.

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